

# Rocky Mountain Canoe Club

## *Journey at Home*

### Rafting the Grand Canyon

March 6 – 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020, 16 people – three from the RMCC -- rafted the Grand Canyon. Lynne Carpenter and Debbie Hinde started at Lees Ferry on the 6<sup>th</sup>. Kat (Kathryn) Mutz hiked down to join the group at Phantom Ranch on the 13<sup>th</sup> when two of the original party hiked out. John Hannigan, a former RMCCer, organized the trip in late 2019 after his wife Maria – unbeknownst to her – won a permit that had been returned to the Grand Canyon lottery for redistribution. The trip included five 18' rental rafts, two personal rafts (one of which was Lynne's 16' raft 'Girlye'), and seven boatloads of rented and personal equipment. Delicious and plentiful food was catered by the outfitter (PRO).

What follows is our *Journey at Home* from that trip.

If you have been on a Grand Canyon trip – recent or even long, long ago – please reply-all to the GoogleGroup with a few photos or a memorable experience from your Grand Canyon journey.

Kat Mutz, Lynne Carpenter, and Debbie Hinde



Outfitter (PRO) truck loaded with rafts, gear and food in Flagstaff, AZ



Unloading the truck at Lees Ferry, March 5, 2020



Ready to launch from Lees Ferry, March 6.



Initial group of 16 rafters, including Lynne Carpenter and Debbie Hinde (both on the right)



Scouting one of the first rapids



Incredible hike at Eminence.

## Change of rafters for Lower Canyon



Kat hiking down to Phantom with Chet hiking part way with her.



The hike started out snowing and misty

But the weather improved on the way down.



On the South Kaibab, you share the 7.5 mile trail with mules – going up or down -- carrying mail, tourists, or their duffles.



This is Chet on the South Kaibab trail – steep sucker! But well maintained except for the mule pee.



The South Kaibab trail winds down to the raft beach near Phantom Ranch – river mile 88



The lower river group – Lynne in front; Debbie and Kat between tall guys on the right.



Lynne, Debbie and Kat rowing Girlie. Lynne did all the big rapids; Debbie and Kat honed their rowing skills on the flat water and small rapids – with excellent instruction from Lynne.



Scouting Horn Creek Rapid a few miles below Phantom Ranch. The water is still clear.



About half way through the trip, the river turned red, but the side streams, including Havasu Creek, were still running clear.





Admiring our survival of Bedrock Rapid – nobody was forced river left (your right) around the rock island. That was a good thing!



Scouting Lava



Lava Rapid – no one flipped. For a video of our group running Lava, see -- <https://youtu.be/7fGJe63-IPi> -- about 30 seconds each -- top to bottom.

**CAMP LIFE**, including good food, good company, laundry, electronics recharging, and Debbie's deluxe bath-on-a-boat shower stall







In camp each night, our trip leader John Hannigan, moderated a recap of the day's events, discussed the next-day plan, diplomatically addressed issues, and introduced the bestowing of the "Smooth Award". The award, initiated by Lynne, recognized an individual each day for everything from rafting accomplishments (youngest new oarsman award, best run on Lava, etc.) to extraordinary help in camp or on the river, to surviving "mishaps" of one type or another. The awardee wore a gold fedora for a day and bestowed the next day's award. The "mishap survival" category included one of the hikers-in at Phantom (a southern Californian) for successfully navigating an Arizona blizzard to start her hike, our permit holder Maria surviving -- with heroic scrambling -- a wrong turn on the Deer Creek hike, and Kat for not letting go of the

raft and participating (with enthusiasm!) in her own rescue after being launched overboard while Lynne navigated a hole on Spector rapid. Debbie received 'honorable mention' for hauling her in!



And there were hikes!

Elves Chasm



With a few brave souls jumping (in their dry suits!)



Fossil Canyon





Spotting canyon wildlife including bighorn at Kanab Creek and razorback suckers in Kanab and Havasu Creeks



Views of the Colorado River from our hike up Deer Creek





Hiking in Deer Creek narrows



The incredible Havasu Creek

And wonderful wildflowers, especially when we got into the lower canyon



On March 24<sup>th</sup>, Diamond Creek was the end of our journey on the Colorado River. Here we left one beautiful, rugged but peaceful world and entered a strange new one. A few days before our take-out date, we had talked with another raft group that told us that we (and they) would not be getting out at Diamond Creek – the Hualapai were closing the take-out. We would have to float another two days to Pierce Ferry. We didn't know if they were kidding or not. With some communication between Chet and our outfitter, relayed to us via a Garmin, we learned that the tribe had planned to close the ramp at Diamond Creek, but decided to allow scheduled take-outs. The NPS had closed the river to new launches at Lees Ferry a couple days before and the Hualapai were closing their ramp to new launches as well.



De-rigging at Diamond Creek



**The End** of this *Grand Canyon Journey at Home*