

# Grand Canyon Chapter

Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, Inc.



The Desert Dispatch Vol. 13, Issue 1

January 2010

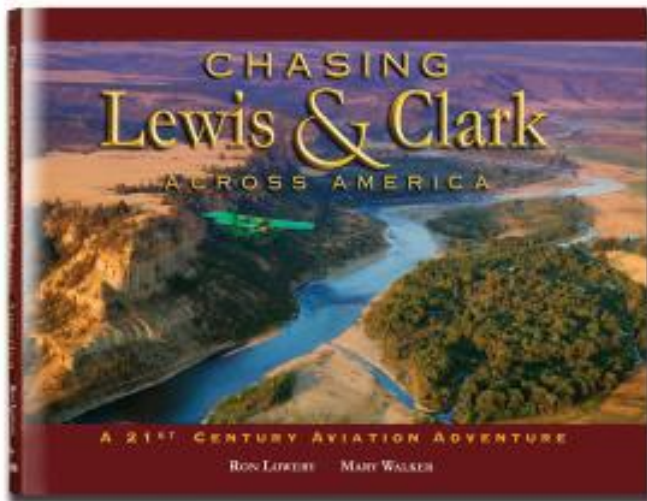
## Chapter Meeting Saturday, January 30

### Chasing Lewis and Clark Across America

*Experience the beauty of our country from a different perspective*

Our guest speaker, **Mary Walker**, will present a special program of a journey with the Corps of Discovery through the camera lens. Flying low and slow above the same rivers, plains and mountains that Lewis and Clark explored, Mary and professional photographer/pilot Ron Lowert captured incredible vistas to celebrate the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Corps of Discovery's odyssey across the continent.

Mary is an accomplished pilot and writer who widely explored her interests in cultural history, ecology and earth sciences. She studied the history of the Lewis and Clark Expedition for three years, traveled the entire route previously by road and small plane, and created a website for schoolchildren on the subject.



During her travels, her compassion for the Native Americans and others met along the trail made the crew of *Chasing Lewis and Clark Across America* many lasting friends.

Let us show our support for the exceptional presenters offered for chapter meetings. Plan to attend with friends and family.

**Club Twenty One Restaurant,  
2920 N. Oracle Road, Tucson**

**Meeting Room opens at 11:30 am  
Luncheon at 12:00 noon  
Program Following Luncheon**

#### From the Journals

December 25, 1804. Ordway.

"cloudy. we fired the Swivels at day break & each man fired one round. our officers Gave the party a drink of Taffee. we had the Best to eat that could be had, & continued firing dancing & frolicking dureing the whole day. the Savages did not Trouble us as we had requested them not to come as it was a Great medician day with us.

we enjoyed a merry cristmas dureing the day & evening untill nine oClock—all in peace & quietness."

January 10, 1805. Clark:

"This morning a boy of 13 years of age Came to the fort with his feet frozed, having Stayed out all night without fire, with no other Covering than a Small Robe goat skin leagens & a pr. Buffalow Skin mockersons—The Murcery Stood at 72° below the freeing point—Several others Stayed out all night not in the least hurt, This boy lost his Toes only."

January 29, 1805. Gass:

"We attemped another plan for getting our water craft disengaged from the ice: which was to heat water in the boats, with hot stones; but in this project we failed, as the stones we found would not stand the fire, but broke to pieces."

Source: "The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition" Edited by Gary E. Moulton, The University of Nebraska Press, 1983-2001  
[Lewisandclarkjournals.unl.edu](http://Lewisandclarkjournals.unl.edu)

# Life on the trail nothing less than amazing

By KEN ROGERS of the Bismarck Tribune

To rise in the morning, after sleeping under the open sky with no tent and in a cold rain, smearing your body with bear grease to keep swarms of mosquitoes away, boiling up some dried buffalo, venison or elk for breakfast, and then putting in a 12-hour day hauling canoes against the relentless Missouri River current, spending as much time in the water as out, in the blistering sun and chafing sand -- ah, that's the life.

Usually, members of the Lewis and Clark Expedition are depicted idyllically sailing up the Missouri River or ambling over a pastoral countryside. It's the urge Americans have to romanticize this national epic.

Truth: The expedition was brutally hard work. It was dangerous, and not just because of the possibility of an Indian fight, but the risk of disease, accidents, capsized boats, grizzlies, snakes, rotten food and worse hiding around each bend in the trail. It took all the inventiveness of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, plus sheer luck, for the corps to stay alive.

And if a member of the expedition did get sick, they had to suffer medical treatment at the hands of Lewis, who was fond of bleeding people and feeding them mercury. It's not clear which was worse, the ailment or the alleged cure. The men did, however, survive.

When a person first comes to Lewis and Clark, the diversity of the corps and its remarkable accomplishments obscure the details of the expedition, and it's in the gritty day-to-day life on the trail that one begins to understand the sheer audacity of the venture.

Given the difficulty of the task, a reader finds little complaint in the journals. It takes a very close read to pull clues of hardship from Lewis and Clark's colorful and inventive prose.

On July 22, 1805, while searching for the Shoshone, Clark wrote: *"The last night verry cold, my blanket being Small I lay on the grass & Covered with it. I opened the bruses & blisters on my feet which caused them to be painfull ä haveing nothing to eat but venison and Currents, I find my Self much weaker than when I left the Canoes."*

And a close read of the journals holds so much more than any summary. The details that are revealed are often amazing, such as Clark walking around with an umbrella and Lewis demonstrating his air gun. The journals provide a profound volume of information -- that the horses belonging to the Mandan and Hidatsa Indians preferred eating cottonwood twigs to grain or meal or that you could sail across the prairie in a canoe with cottonwood wheels.

In the search for details from the journals, there's no better place to go than the edition prepared by Gary E. Moulton for the University of Nebraska. His attention to detail makes this multi-volume set a priceless tool for understanding the expedition.

Another great source of information about the expedition is the magazine *We Proceeded On*, the publication of the National Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation. In issues over the years, the magazine has carried stories by historians and Lewis and Clark enthusiasts that open windows to the expedition. The stories are about such topics as the liquor carried by the party or the song they would have sung around the campfire or the weapons used by the expedition.

In preparing this publication, I have drawn heavily on Moulton and *We Proceeded On*, in an effort to show what it was like to be a part of the Lewis and Clark Expedition some 200 years ago. Without these two resources, this project would hardly have been possible.

People do want to know what life with the Corps of Discovery was like, and not only from books. More and more, people are clambering into canoes and kayaks in order to experience the Missouri River. They are visiting Lewis and Clark campsites, walking the Lolo trail or spending a winter night at the reconstructed Fort Mandan in North Dakota.

Having these personal Lewis and Clark experiences can only increase a person's understanding of how remarkable this national odyssey was.

## MEMBERS LEARN OF ADVENTURES ON THE COLORADO

For those who chose to forego a pleasant trip to Prescott for the chapter meeting on November 14, you missed clear fresh air, a really interesting program, and an afternoon of camaraderie at the Gurley Street Grill.

Meeting at the Sharlot Hall Museum, members and guests enjoyed a colorful power-point presentation by **Todd Weber** as he outlined a historical timeline of Grand Canyon events and personalities up to the river-runners of the Colorado today.

The known history of the Grand Canyon area stretches back 10,500 years when the first evidence for human presence in the area started. Native Americans have been living there for at least the last 3,000 to 4,000 of those years. In the 1930s artifacts consisting of split-twig animal figurines were found in the Redwall Limestone cliffs of the Inner Gorge that were dated in this range.



Captain Garcia Lopez de Cardenas led a party of Spanish soldiers with Hopi guides to the canyon in September of 1540. Not finding what they were looking for, they left. Over 200 years passed before two Spanish priests, Fathers Domínguez and Escalante, became the second party of non-Native Americans to see the canyon as they traveled along the North Rim in 1776 in search of a route from Santa Fe to Monterey, California.

In 1857 the U.S. War Department launched an expedition to investigate the regions potential for natural resources and assess the feasibility of an up-river navigation route from the Gulf of California. After seeing the canyon, its leader Lt. Joseph Ives, declared that the canyon and surrounding area as "altogether valueless," remarking that his expedition would be "the last party of whites to visit this profitless locality."



Powell's 2<sup>nd</sup> Expedition, 1872

In 1869 U.S. Army Major John Wesley Powell set out to explore the Colorado River and the Grand Canyon from the north. He gathered nine men, four boats and food for ten months and set out from Green River, Wyoming on May 24. The expedition was shortened when one of the boats capsized, spilling most of their food and much of their scientific equipment into the river.

One man quit after the first month, and tired of being constantly cold, wet and hungry three more gave up and climbed out of the Grand Canyon just two days before reaching the west end on August 30. How and why those three men disappeared remains a mystery debated by Powell biographers.

Two years later a much better-funded Powell-led party returned with redesigned boats and a chain of several supply stations along their route. Photographs and illustrations from the expedition greatly popularized the Grand Canyon.

The Brown-Stanton expedition was started in 1889 to survey the route for a "water-level" railroad line through the canyons of the Colorado River to the Gulf of California. Plans for the proposed railway, which was to carry coal from mines in Colorado were later abandoned.

In 1909, Nathaniel Calloway became the first person to successfully run through the canyon twice by using his specially designed stern-first, face forward boats. That year Julius Stone used similar flat bottom boats for his river expedition from Wyoming.

One of the canyon's unsolved mysteries involved newlyweds Glen and Bessie Hyde who disappeared while attempting to run the rapids of the Colorado River in 1928. Had they succeeded, Bessie would have been the first documented woman in history to do so. Glen had hoped to capitalize on their trip by writing a book about it using Bessie's journal notes and photographs.

See [Adventures on the Colorado, Page 4](#)

## Adventures on the Colorado continued

Last seen when they hiked Bright Angel Trail out of the canyon for supplies, their homemade scow was later found adrift around river mile 237; upright and fully intact, with the supplies still strapped in. A camera recovered from the boat revealed the final photo to have been taken near river mile 165, on or about November 27. It is thought to be most likely that they fell or were swept out of the boat in heavy rapids near river mile 232. Their story has been the subject of numerous plots, novels and films.

Completion of the Boulder Dam in 1936 prevented river runners from continuing down river to the Gulf of California.

Haldane "Buzz" Holmstrom was a pioneer of running the Colorado River alone. He designed and built his own flat-bottomed rowboats to run whitewater rivers and was the first person to float solo all the way from Green River, Wyoming to Boulder Dam in 1937. The following year, he repeated the run with Amos Burg and Willis Johnson. The trip was captured in Burg's short movie, *Conquering the Colorado*.

During the 1930-1940s Norman D. Nevills opened up commercial river-running in the American Southwest. He led trips including the first two women to successfully float the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon. In ten years of leading paying customers down the Colorado, San Juan, and Green Rivers, he never lost a customer. Magazines and newspapers labeled him "The World's No. 1 Fast-Water Man."

Georgie White Clark was a well known river-running guide on the Colorado from 1950-1990s. In 1945, unable to afford a boat or raft, she and Harry Aleson swam the lower part of the Canyon. Wearing a swimsuit, sneakers, and a life jacket, they swam 60 miles of cold, fast water from Diamond Peak to Lake Mead. In 1946, they again swam down the Colorado River, this time twice the distance of the previous year. In 1947, they used a war-surplus inflatable raft to run the Green and Colorado—among the first people to do so.

White was the first woman to row the full length of Marble and Grand Canyons in 1952. She made her name when, in the early 1950s, she lashed three rafts together to achieve better stability in big rapids and began taking paying customers to "share the expense" of running the river. Her methods were controversial, as those who ran the river in wooden rowboats such as dories disdained the rubber rafts.



She kept her river-guiding business going for 45 years. Her last Grand Canyon trip took place in September of 1991 as she was approaching her 80th birthday. In 2001, the United States Board on Geographic Names renamed Mile 24 Rapid in her honor.<sup>1</sup>

With completion of the Glen Canyon Dam in 1963 the Colorado River in its passage through the Grand Canyon would never be the same. Now sealed off at both ends, the once wild river has been transformed into a carefully-tended aquarium with its flow controlled and monitored. This, however, has not deterred people who have been drawn to the wonders and adventures of the Colorado River as it weaves its' way through the Grand Canyon.

Despite Lt. Ives's projection that his expedition would be the last party of whites to visit this profitless locality, 25,000 people run the river annually and five million visit the canyon itself.

An experienced river rafter, Todd also presented numerous photographs of his own latest journey; a recent 18 day trip down the Colorado with his brother on a two man raft.

And, although Todd did not mention any documented visits into the Grand Canyon by members of The Corps of Discovery, we jokingly hint at times that they may have. The following article which appeared in Newsweek Magazine, August 18, 2003 almost substantiated our hoax.

## ENVIRONMENT Congratulations! It's a Baby Condor!

It's been nearly 100 years since a condor chick was hatched in the Grand Canyon. After a precariously close call with extinction caused by lead poisoning—only 22 wild birds remained in the early 1980s—the condor is poised to make a comeback. And though biologists have yet to visually confirm the chick's existence, they're nearly certain that it's thriving, based on an adult nesting pair's behavior. "Both the male and female are going back and forth between what we believe is a nest in a remote cave in the canyon and their feeding sites," says Chris Parish, a wildlife biologist with the Peregrine Fund. "This is classic nesting behavior since non-nesting condors don't roost in the same spot from night to night." Scientists believe the chick was hatched in early May.



**COMEBACK CHICK:** Like this one—but born in the wild

In their diaries, Lewis and Clark documented that they saw dozens of condors during their trek through the Grand Canyon nearly 200 years ago.

The gangly-looking black birds, members of the vulture family, are the largest flying land birds in North America. Since 1996, ornithologists have released lab-born condors into the canyon and in rural parts of California, bringing the number of birds living in the wild to 70. Several of these condors have laid eggs in recent years in California, and last year in the Grand Canyon, but all the chicks had died in their shells. "We've found high concentrations of lead in the shells and in the blood of the adult condors," says Parish. "We know that some of the lead has come from lead shot but we don't know if that explains the whole picture." This Grand Canyon chick, if it remains alive and well, will likely fledge in September—and become the canyon's sweetest sight.

—TARA WEINGARTEN

10 NEWSWEEK AUGUST 18, 2003

TOP TO BOTTOM: NO CREDIT (4); JOEL SARTORE—NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC—GETTY IMAGES

**“In their diaries, Lewis and Clark documented that they saw dozens of condors during their trek through the Grand Canyon nearly 200 years ago.”**

You know, it would be really interesting to read Lewis's description of our Grand Canyon; the most sublime and awe-inspiring spectacle in the world. Makes one wonder... humm, maybe it is in the missing journals!!

A Chapter Board Meeting was held on **November 14, 2009** at the Sharlot Hall Museum in Prescott.

President Jean Myers called the meeting to order at 10:30 am with Jack Nottingham, Ray Gentry, Doris Martin and Audrey Aungst, in attendance. Members reviewed and approved proposed changes to the Chapter By-Laws.

## Foundation Memberships

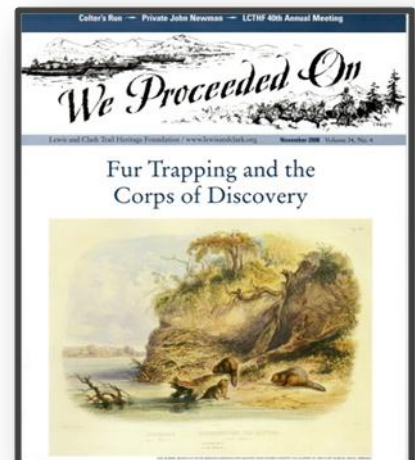
Although not currently required, members of the Grand Canyon Chapter are encouraged to belong to our parent organization, the *Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, Inc.* as well.

The Foundation publishes a quarterly journal, *We Proceeded On*, which is filled with historical articles on the Expedition, deeds of the explorers, stories from the National Historic Trail, and informative book notes and reviews. It's a great magazine!

It also maintains an archives and library; promotes local activities and events; funds projects, supports research and study and convenes annually where members travel the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail.

The *Orderly Report* is their outstanding quarterly newsletter which keeps members well informed of current events within the Foundation as well as local chapters from across the country.

Check out the web site at [www.lewisandclark.org](http://www.lewisandclark.org). ..... or call: **1-888-701-3434**.



## Chapter Officers

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Doris Martin 520-747-0937  
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## On the Calendar

### Saturday, January 30, 2010: Chapter Meeting in Tucson

11:30 am, Club Twenty One Restaurant, Tucson AZ.  
"Chasing Lewis and Clark Across America," by Mary Walker  
Experience the beauty of the Lewis and Clark Trail from the air.

### Saturday, March 13: Chapter Meeting in Scottsdale

"Lewis to Linnard Letter." By Lorna Hainesworth  
Location to be Determined

### August 1 – 4, 2010: 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual LCTHF Meeting

42<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation in **Lewiston, Idaho**. The meeting will be based at the Nez Perce Tribe's Event Center just east of Lewiston. Three field trips are planned during the meeting.

### July 31 – August 3, 2011: 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual LCTHF Meeting

The 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation will be held in Omaha, NE.

## Time to Renew Chapter Memberships

Chapter membership dues cover a calendar year and are collected at the beginning of each year.

Membership dues pay for meeting sites, speaker awards, newsletter publication, mailings and administrative expenses.

**Dues for 2010 are:**  
**\$12.00 per individual, \$24.00 per family**

Please take a moment to renew your membership by mailing your check in the pre-addressed envelope provided with this newsletter to:

David E. Aungst, Grand Canyon Chapter  
11014 E. Rising Sun Drive  
Scottsdale, AZ 85262

**"Thanks for your continued support"**

## The Desert Dispatch

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members and friends.

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