



PIONEERS SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Volume 4, Number 7

September 1993

Camp Out September 11

If you plan to go on the trip originally scheduled for September 11 to Bass Camp on the South Rim of Grand Canyon, **PLEASE READ THIS** now.

Due to Park Service regulations we have had to make some changes in our plans. Therefore on Sept. 11 we will have a **DAY TRIP TO HAVASUPAI POINT. ONLY ELEVEN (11)** persons are allowed to camp there for the night. So we have made reservations for up to

25 persons to camp at TEN-X for that night.

We will meet at TEN-X, located just south of Tusayan at 10 AM on Saturday, Sept. 11 and set up tents of those who will be returning there for the night, then we will arrange transportation for all of us to Havasupai Point to spend the day together.

Regardless of where you plan to camp, bring everything needed for camping overnight in the back country.

As we understand it, there are no tables, seating arrangements, toilet facilities, water, or provision for cooking at Havasupai. These are all found at Ten-X, but you will need flashlight, folding chairs, something for carrying water, cooking utensils, sleeping bag (and it gets chilly there) and food to carry you through.

Onward, brave Pioneers. Now is the time to prove your mettle.

The August Pioneers Meeting

There should be a law against eating so much. Or maybe the law should be against people bringing so much good food so I cannot resist eating it. Of course I know it is my own fault . . . no one said I had to eat some of everything and go back around a second time. That is what I did, and I was not alone 'cause most everyone did at Paul and Marie Maiorana's house on Saturday, August 21.

Paul scared the rain showers away for the afternoon by buying a plastic canopy to put over the deck. Though it looked like it would storm at any mo-

ment nothing happened. Maybe we should take him with us on all our get togethers. Twenty-two members and one guest attended our gabfest: **Mike**

and **Nancy Gibson**, **Ron Werhan** (just back from a two week trip to Ireland, he left Carol over there for two more weeks), **Mary McKenzie**, **Edwin and Ruth Druding**, **Al Richmond** (just back from a fishing trip to Canada), **Fred and Jeanne Schick**, **Esther Meyers**, **Matt and Robyn Werhan**, **Linda Wade**, **Doug Van Cleave**, **Dave and Bernice Nelson**, **Eldon and Maxine Roth** (who are leaving for an extended trip to Kansas and won't be back until the first of the year), **Bill and Sibyl Suran** (who just returned from a long trip to Winslow where they spent the day), **Paul and Marie Maiorana** (who as far as I know have not been anyplace), and our guest **Kelly Bloomfield**.

After stuffing ourselves, we held a short business meeting where Al Richmond explained about the trouble we

had gaining a permit to camp at the Canyon Rim on September 11, (see elsewhere in this newsletter). It was also decided to move the P.O. Box from



Ruth Druding, Jeanne Schick and Robyn Werhan looking for food.

Grand Canyon to Flagstaff to speed up our mail delivery.

Ron Werhan gave a report on the progress of getting the Peggy Verkamp Thesis published. That will be completed before Christmas if all goes as planned. Bill Suran showed a sample of stationery and note cards that will be offered for sale, also for a possible Christmas gift suggestion. Marie has

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designed the letterheads and prepared a nice packet. The club will get a nice cut from the sale of these to be applied to the scholarship fund. With that out

of the way, everyone gathered up their empty dishes and headed home. I can't answer for all, but I felt like I wouldn't need to eat again for several days, how-

ever, I changed my mind before going to bed and raided the ice box for whatever I could find. Oh well, I guess that is life.



Ron Werhan and Al Richmond obviously discussing empty plate



Edwin Druding and Kelly Bloomfield pausing before ice cream

ThatTime Again

How time flies . . . It seems like only yesterday that we sent out letters for the nomination of new board members. According to the by-laws the election of new board members comes every year in October. The Grand Canyon Pioneers Society has fifteen members who serve a three year term as its governing body. It is necessary for the membership to nominate five persons to fill the vacancies left by those who have fulfilled their terms of office. This board will elect the officers for the following year.

The current board that will serve for one or two years more is made up of: Jim Babbitt, Ethel Cole, Marie Maiorana, Harvey Butchart, Fred Schick, Bill Suran, Sibyl Suran, Chris

Verkamp, Gene Wendt, and Ron Werhan. Those retiring this year are: Buford Belgard, Harry Cole, Jeanne Schick, Al Richmond and Carol Furey-Werhan.

Enclosed in this issue of the GCPS Newsletter you will find the nomination ballot. Please fill it out with your choice for the five vacancies and return it by September 20, 1993 to the address shown on the ballot. You can nominate any member, including yourself, or any of those who are retiring. We will include a ballot in the October newsletter for the election of the five new members; the results will be announced October 30, 1993.

This year the annual meeting will be held at **2:PM at the Moqui Lodge** just

outside of Grand Canyon National Park. Our guest speaker will be Pam Frazier of the Grand Canyon Natural History Association. Pam will tell us about the Association and what it's all about and give us some insight into what goes on in publishing a book. It should prove informative, and knowing Pam, interesting.

The management of the Lodge has consented to give those wishing to remain overnight a discounted rate of \$50 (\$26 off the usual rate), for a room at the lodge. It is an opportunity for those wishing to take advantage of the offer to see the sunrise at Grand Canyon.

How Many Scenic's

How many Scenic's have been in Grand Canyon aviation over the years?

"Let's take a scenic tour," seems to be a commonly used alternative for "sightseeing flight."

Descriptive. Brief. The word "scenic" fits easily in the tourist lexicon

with the result that "scenic" has been applied at one time or another to most of the airplane companies that have flown over or near the Grand Canyon of the Colorado.

By Ron Warren

But how many aviation businesses have elected to use "Scenic" as part of their corporate or trade name though?

In 1927, Scenic Airways was incorporated in Utah as the outgrowth of an idea to link the western National Parks with a sightseeing airline. This is the

"Scenic" that first engaged in commercial air tours at the old Red Butte Airport twelve miles south of Grand Canyon Village. In 1929, it became a wholly owned subsidiary of United Aviation Corporation, but continued doing business seasonally at Grand Canyon through 1930 under the name "Scenic." In 1931, the corporation was dissolved, the casualty of hard times and, perhaps, being a little bit too far afield for its Chicago and New York based owners.

In 1936, Grand Canyon Scenic Tours was incorporated in Arizona by Glover E. Ruckstell, but its sole mission in life was to hold the certificates of Public Convenience and Necessity issued by the Arizona Corporation Commission for air routes. Other than that function, it never engaged in business. In 1939, it became a wholly owned subsidiary of Grand Canyon - Boulder Dam Tours and, in 1947, it too was dissolved. In 1939, a Utah business named Scenic American Air Lines applied to the Civil Aeronautics Administration for a

Certificate to fly from Salt Lake City to Phoenix with intermediate stops at Bryce, Zion, and Grand Canyon. Not a lot more is known about this "Scenic", but it doesn't appear that flights ever



Roy Burris, Lester Carr, Mrs. Carr, J. Parker Van Zandt 1928 from Grand Canyon to Phoenix

started.

In the early 1950's, another Canyon tour operator started business from TWA's Valle Airport, 30 miles south of the Village, under the name of Scenic Skyways. After a complaint to the Arizona Corporation Commission by G & C Airlines, the certificate holder at the Grand Canyon Airport at Red Butte, Skyways faded away.

In 1967, Scenic Airlines was incorporated in Nevada by John and Liz Seibold. This is the company most responsible for creating the international interest in air tours to Grand

Canyon from Las Vegas. On June 15, 1993 the name "Scenic Airlines" and air tour business was sold to Skywest Airlines (Aviation Services West) of St. George, Utah.

There's also Scenic Aviation Services, a Nevada corporation owned by the Seibolds, which provides fuel and other ground services to airplanes at McCarran Airport in Las Vegas. It wasn't sold to

Skywest and is still in business.

With the acquisition of the "Scenic" name by Skywest, the number of aviation companies who have used the name "Scenic" in or around the Grand Canyon totals seven that I know of.

If you think that the use of Scenic in trade names is confusing, wait until another installment on how many Grand Canyon Airlines there've been.

Gunnar Widforss

By Betty Kent Meyer

I knew "Weedy" (as Gunner Widforss was affectionately called) in 1926. He was living in a room at Emery Kolb's and ran a tab for his meals at the Bright Angel lunch counter. He was always broke as he gave most of his paintings away or sold them for very little if a person admired them. At one time his bill at the Bright Angel was so

high Fred Harvey had him paint a number of small paintings that could sell in Chicago and Kansas City for \$25.

Gunnar Widforss, one of nine children, was born October 21, 1879 in Stockholm, Sweden. In 1896 he entered the Royal Technical Institute in Stockholm and upon graduation in 1900, the city of Stockholm awarded

him a journeyman's certificate as a decorative painter. He painted and restored churches in the Scandinavian countries and in St. Petersburg, Russia, and painted pictures at every opportunity.

From 1904 to 1908 he wandered in Europe, and while in Switzerland, he made up his mind to become an artist

painter. This was the beginning of his career, and he never again doubted his ability. Widforss lived frugally, sometimes almost in poverty, but he was happy. When no pictures were to be sold and his savings low, he painted and decorated houses.

He achieved his first major success in 1912 when he held two exhibitions with some much discussed works. Two of his paintings were accepted at the Paris Salon and several were acquired by King Gustav of Sweden, and the Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria and other connoisseurs.

After serving a short compulsory enlistment in the Swedish Army, during World War I, he again traveled over Europe. In the autumn of 1920 after several gratifying exhibitions, he began thinking of a visit to the Orient. With money in his pocket, he came to the U.S. in 1921 on his proposed trip to the Far East, and was so taken by the wonderful scenery in California he decided to stay in America. At "Yo-se-mighty", as he called the park, he worked at illustrating a book of poems by Harold Symmer. Here he met Stephen Mather, the first director of the National Park Service, who became his friend and patron and urged him to specialize in painting the National Parks. "He is the only one who can paint the redwoods in watercolor," Mather said.

Widforss then began a rich production of paintings that led to a one-man exhibition at the National Gallery of Art in Washington in December of 1924. "These are the finest things of their kind that have come out of the West," said Director W. H. Holmes. "He is possibly the greatest watercolorist in America today."

I saw Weedy many times on the canyon rim painting. As you know the Canyon is very moody, he could only paint for a couple of hours at any one point, so he moved all the time working on many pictures at the same time. He

was a perfectionist and would put aside finished paintings, always thinking he could make a small addition. That is why at his death he left so many unsigned pictures and explains how I came to own four of them, a small roadside flower scene, two of the Redwoods, and one of Crater Lake. There weren't many of these because he didn't like the area and left there in a short time. I later sold the paintings to Hussberg Studios in Sedona and as I had no idea of the value, I probably didn't get what I should have. I took the money and went to Israel.

Widforss' ever increasing love for the Western United States led him to apply for U.S. Citizenship. His certificate of naturalization, issued June 3, 1929 at San Francisco described him as 49 years old, 5'-4" with ruddy complexion, blue eyes and light brown hair. It also stated he was unmarried and had no children.

In 1930 he returned to Sweden and Europe for a visit, but his home was western USA. Of all the places he had painted, Widforss loved the Grand Canyon best. He especially liked the North Rim in the early fall for the shades of yellows in the Aspen leaves. Edwin McKee, an authority on Grand Canyon geology, said "Widforss' paintings are remarkably faithful in detail and careful records of nature."

Among his well-known friends were Barry Goldwater, James Kintner of Phoenix and the Right Reverend William Scarlett, Episcopal Bishop of Missouri. Bishop Scarlett and Widforss took over the run down cabin at the head of Hance Trail at Grandview Point, fixed it up and lived there one summer. Scarlett said his house was painted by "a real high class painter."

In the fall of 1934 the Bishop arranged an exhibition in St. Louis at

Noonan-Kocian Galleries. Widforss drove to St. Louis with high hopes and a car full of paintings. His exhibition was not a financial success despite high reviews in the papers. There were a number of reasons why - St. Louis was a conservative city, Widforss' name was not well-known, money was tight after the depression and the United Relief

fund was in full swing. Some critics told Widforss that watercolors did not bring the price of oil paintings and he had to paint pictures that

people would buy. He went out and bought a supply of oil paints and canvasses.

Before Widforss started back to the Canyon, Bishop Scarlett urged him to have a physical. The Bishop's own personal physician put him in St. Luke's hospital for five days and told him he could never live at the canyon again. However, he improved so much the doctor let him start home by way of the southern route. He wrote to Danny McDade that he might be able to bring his paintings to the Canyon and stay a few hours or maybe overnight as he wanted to have a last card game with Les Kennedy, the manager of Bright Angel; Harry Parker, manager of El Tovar; and his business manager, Dan McDade. The game had been a weekly affair most of his canyon days.

Widforss, out of money as usual, stopped in Phoenix and wanted to leave 40 paintings with Kintner who was afraid they wouldn't be safe, since his house was empty most of the time. Kintner gave him what money he had on him and called the Hassayampa Hotel in Prescott advising them Gunnar would be spending the night and to put it on his tab.

The next day, September 30, 1934 Widforss arrived at Grand Canyon during lunch hour. He first went to see Frank Spencer and Porter Timeche at the Hopi House, then parked in front of El

...he could never live at the canyon again.

As you know the Canyon is very moody...

...he couldn't stay but he wanted one last poker game.

Tovar, and walked into the lobby. Harry Parker was there and said "Weedy" looked fine. Widforss said he couldn't stay but he wanted one last poker game. He said he would drive down to the Bright Angel and tell Les Kennedy. But he never got there.

Porter Timeche, walking down the steps outside El Tovar saw the familiar little Ford make the switch back turn toward the Bright Angel. He then saw Widforss swerve and run into a pinion tree almost in front of him. The driver looked as if he had fallen asleep, but when Timeche shook Widforss and called his name he didn't answer. The funeral was held in the El Tovar Music

Room with internment at Grand Canyon Cemetery.

The St. Louis Dispatch published this item:

The many admirers of the art of the late Gunnar Widforss, painter of the National Parks, will be glad to know that the U. S. Board of Geographic names has designated a 7800 ft. promontory on the north rim of Grand Canyon as Widforss Point., in memory of the artist. Bishop Scarlett and M.R. Tillotson, Superintendent of the National Park are chiefly responsible for the designation. If the modest, self-effacing Widforss could have wanted his name attached to any feature of

American landscape, it would have been a high point overlooking the Grand Canyon of changing colors which he loved so deeply and painted so faithfully.

A Kaibab limestone boulder marks Widforss' grave with a bronze plaque with these lines from Robert Brown:

Bury this man there. Here's his place, where meteors shoot, clouds form. Lightnings are loosened, stars come and go, lofty designs must close in like effects, lofty lying - leave him still loftier than the world suspects. Living and dying.

B i t s a n d P i e c e s

Another Outlaw

In the September 1992 newsletter we asked if anyone had information regarding other outlaws at the Canyon other than Danny Ray Horning. Betty Meyer recalls back in the 1920's a man named Kimes who had escaped from the penitentiary in Oklahoma, visited

the Canyon to see the sights. When he stopped at the checking station the attendant recognized him from the poster bearing his picture and called the Santa Fe officers. The search was on. The officers found the prisoner in the Canyon just below Verkamps store.

I have some old 16 mm films that my dad took during the 1928 dedication mentioned in the article.

Roy E. Burris
P.O. Box 31137
Rio Verde Az. 85263

Aug 2, 1993

Dear Editor:

The August Newsletter was the best newsletter ever! How can they keep getting better and better. You have a great challenge now. . . . Glad the field trips are announced so much in advance . . . gives us a chance to arrange our calendars. We're not going to miss any of 'em.

Fred and Jeanne Schick
Sedona, Az.

July 15, 1993

Times have changed since then. Horning passed nonchalantly through the Park gates twice without being identified and was captured near Sedona several days later.

Bill Suran , Editor

I am researching aspects of Grand Canyon History; particularly the eastern area. If any G.C. Pioneers knew the following or their descendants I'd appreciate receiving a card. Many listed lived past the 1950's:

They are: George Bailey, Bedlias family, Charles M. Berteling, Bunker family, J.W.B. Calhoun, Gus Carlson, Peter Clard, Alf & Walter Dickinson, FrankDodge, Fred Hensing, Elliot Hodge (Hodgen?), Jacobs family, Charles E. Lazure, George McCormick, E.O. McCoy, Preston Mercer, Alfred Peterson, Jack (Ace) Walker, R.C. Whitson, and Frank Wyatt.

Dove Menkes
2530 Coventry Circle
Fullerton, CA 92633

Letters To The Editor

Pioneers:

Here are some duplicate photos of the Shoshone Bar B Que we thought you would like for any scrapbooks the group may have.

It was a fun get together.
Hope you like the photos.
Charlie and Ilene Bongo
P.O. Box 1121
Grand Canyon. 86023

ED. *Thanks for the great pictures. They will go in our new scrapbook.*

Bill Suran

Just read with considerable interest the article by Dick Brown about the Grand Canyon Pioneer Cemetery, as my parents (Clara and Roy Burris) are buried there.

Obituary

We were recently advised of the death of one of our members, Millie Schmidtke a former Harvey Girl at Grand Canyon from the 1920's until the

1950's. Millie passed away May 15, 1993 in Newport Beach Ca. and was interred at Taos N.M. Our condolen-

ces to her daughter Frances and her husband Earl Lewis.

New Members

We welcome **Dr. and Mrs. Joseph Kirchvink** of Phoenix, Arizona; **Dr. C.W. Pullen**, of Ganado, Arizona; **Jim and Lea Tuck** of Grand Canyon, Az; **Janice Griffith**, of Winslow Az; **Doug**

Jackson of Flagstaff, Az; **Frances M. Lewis** of Newport Beach, California; and **Mrs Sonia B. Clemens** of Coolidge, California, as new members of the Grand Canyon Pioneers Society.

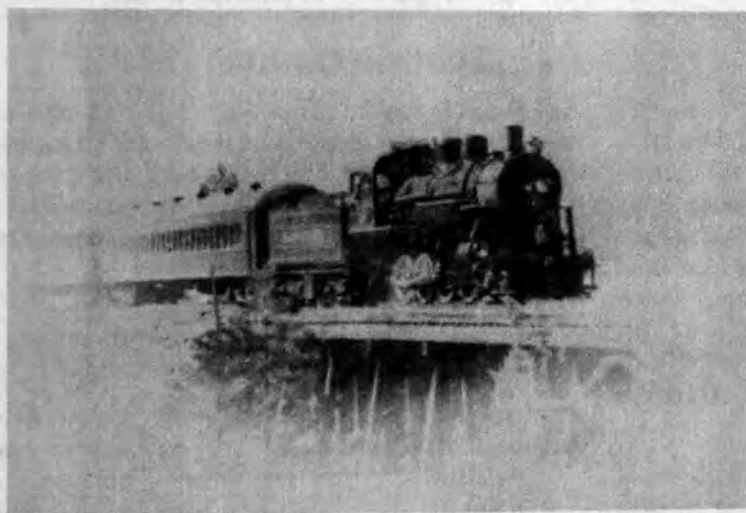
We hope you will all be able to attend some of our outings and meetings and we look forward to meeting you.

Mark your calendars

for the up-coming Pioneers get together: **SEPTEMBER 11**, Trip to

Havasupai Point, Grand Canyon; **OC-TOBER 30**, Annual meeting at Moqui

Lodge Tusayan; **DECEMBER-** No meeting or outing planned .



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P. O. Box 2372
Flagstaff, AZ 86003-2372