

RAFTING the GRAND CANYON

WITH STUMPS 'R' US MEMBER
PAM SEIFERT



I am a left, below the knee amputee and a survivor of a stroke. While vacationing in Jamaica and Costa Rica last summer, we participated in a couple of short day trips on rafts through rain forests. We realized, that despite my acquired disabilities, I was able to enjoy some rafting.

So we added rafting the Grand Canyon to our bucket list!

We researched the options and decided that an 8 day motorized raft would be the best option for us. These rafts are large and very stable and enable you to cover most of the Canyon - 225 miles in 8 days. Arizona Raft Adventures, AZRA, came highly recommended and their web site even showed them accommodating some wheelchairs clients.

We invited various family and friends to join us and we wound up with a group of ten. Another 14 people had also signed up so we were 24 passengers on 2 large rafts with 4 excellent guides.

The nights were spent camping on sand bars along the river. AZRA provided, prepared and served 3 excellent meals per day. They also provided folding camp chairs as well as sleeping bags, pads and tents if desired. Due to my special needs we brought a comfortable folding camp cot for me.

The trickiest part for me was getting onto and off the raft each day. Fortunately, each time a group of helpers materialized to help hoist me up or down. I should note that people we'd not known prior to the trip were helpful to me, not only our family and friends.

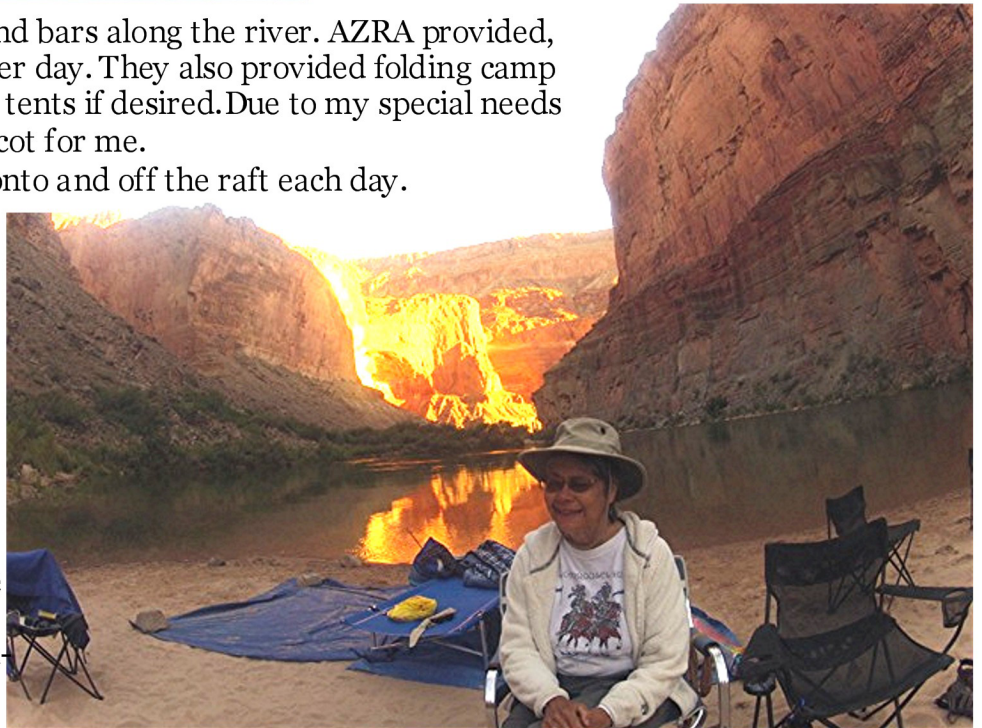
Each day we stopped somewhere along the river for side hikes. I am not up to significant hiking so the guides set me up in or near the rafts with shade and water while the rest of the group was off exploring. One day, as I sat alone by the river, a Condor soared overhead.

I think my favorite moment of the entire trip was along a quiet stretch of river when our guide cut the motor and

encouraged us all to be silent and listen to the sounds of the canyon. She began by reading us a Wendell Berry poem about finding a quiet spot in nature when wrestling with human worries as a way to get a fresh perspective. I must say that rafting the Grand Canyon is a way to gain a fresh perspective.

It was very hot on our June trip but the river water was about 50 degrees so we always had a handy way to cool off. The large rafts were stable enough to let us enjoy the adventure of white water without white-knuckle fear. Depending on where you sat you got a more or less exciting ride and more or less drenching in the rapids.

With everyone's help, I was able to experience and enjoy the full adventure. Sleeping next to the roaring Colorado at the bottom of the Grand Canyon with deep night skies and some beautiful sunrises are as beautiful as you might expect.



**With some special equipment, some friends and the right outfitter
this is a trip you will never forget.**