



December 2003

Happy Holidays! I hope your year has been a full and healthy one.

Time sure flies when you are having fun. To my utter disbelief, I am forced to face my 50th birthday (or as I prefer to call it - the 11th anniversary of my 39th birthday) this month. It just seems like yesterday...

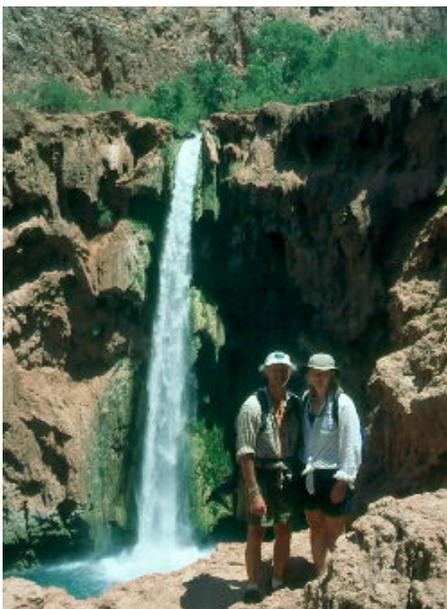
It was another full and adventurous year. In February, I traveled to New Orleans where I did the Mardi Gras Marathon. It was my first time on

Bourbon Street - I enjoyed the people-watching entertainment. Another highlight was a bayou tour on an airboat where we were lucky enough to see a wild gator.

We finally had a good winter; topped off by a 3-½ foot snowstorm in March where the city came to a standstill for 2 - 3 days, so the rafting season was a good one. It started in April with a trip down Westwater Canyon, which is just across the border in Utah.



In June, I organized a group of 22 people to boat down the Yampa River, which flows through the Dinosaur National Monument. This is a hard permit to obtain so I felt pretty lucky.



In July, I was able to revisit an old "home" of mine, the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon. It had been 9 years since my last trip, which I had done as a commercial guide. For this trip, I was invited by a great group of folks from the East Coast who were looking for experienced boatmen to take them down. What made it



more enjoyable was a couple of their friends had to cancel, so I was able to fill those spots with friends of mine, including my good friend, Melissa. It was a great 15-day trip, which brought back many great memories of trips past. It rekindled a hope of mine that some day I will be



able to return to that simpler, freer lifestyle.



This was a good year for me in lotteries. It's through a lottery that I was able to get a Yampa River permit. It was also through a lottery that I was able to organize a team to run the very popular "Hood to Coast Relay" in Oregon, which is in late August. This race is for teams of 12 running 195 miles from



Mount Hood to the Pacific Coast in Seaside, OR. It took us just over 22 hours. Three weeks later, we did the Colorado Relay for our fourth straight year. This race is for 10-person teams running 170 miles and over three mountain passes. This year my brother Dennis was able to recruit some very fast women (who carried us men), so we were able to finally win the coed division. That will only mean more pressure for us next year as we try to repeat.

For the past year, I had been trying to talk Dennis into running another marathon. He first experience didn't go too well, but then that's not unusual. We decided on the Philadelphia Marathon, which was in November. Part of the attraction was this would be an opportunity to go back to where we had both grown up. This was my first time back in about 17 - 18 years. It was strange driving around the old neighborhood trying to remember what it used to be like while being overwhelmed by all the changes. Surprisingly, there were some sections that looked exactly the same as it did in the 1960's.



My brother ran a great race and easily qualified for the Boston Marathon. As I had qualified a year ago in Tucson, come next April, we are hoping that it will work out with both our schedules to go to Boston to do that marathon.

I wish you the happiest of New Year's. I will be celebrating with friends backpacking in the Grand Canyon.

I know that I am not the best at keeping in touch, but please know that I do think of my friends often.

All the very best,

Paul