

MILLY'S LAKE POWELL ADVENTURES

MARCH 2003



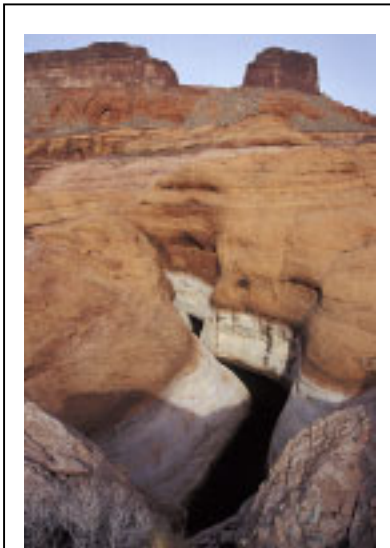
MY LAKE POWELL ADVENTURES

By Milly and Darlene Ward (Milly's Ghost Writer)

I quietly and quickly survey the terrain below me, watching keenly for any slight movement near the bushes, in the sandy washes or on the slickrock. I am an Anasazi sentry dog, given the responsibility of protecting my people from surprise attack or any other dangers in this isolated desert. My name is Meelay the Intrepid, a name I earned when I carried out an especially dangerous assignment. I never faltered, even in the face of personal injury and disfigurement. I persevered and brought honor to my family when.....Wait! There is something moving down there by the bush. I must go!



I scan the terrain above Cascade Canvon



Cascade Canvon



Checking out the bushes above Cascade Canyon

I hurried down from my rock and quickly sniffed around the bush. It may have been a lizard or it might have been a rabbit. I never tire of following scents and always hope I will find something alive. This hike above Cascade Canyon is fascinating. At one place we found a small circle of rocks with a bush growing in the middle. It may have been used by the Anasazi to store food. We found one very small arrowhead, which we left at the site. I like to imagine that I was there, with the Anasazi, a friend to the brave people living in the desert.



Possible Anasazi storage



**Slickrock, Lake Powell and Navajo Mountain on the way to
Cascade Canyon Overlook**

I am not really an Anasazi dog, although I was born on an Indian reservation and my ancestors might have lived with the Anasazi. I live with two very special humans, the best people in the world. Ada and Jim take care of me and I take care of them. Ada claims that she can always rely on me to find the way home when we are out hiking. Jim makes sure that my food and water supply remains steady, and he never complains about getting up during the night if I need to go outside. Unlike the ancient dogs, I don't have furs to sleep on, but I have my very own sleeping bag. In fact, I have two bags, so one can stay in the Sea Sport and the other in camp or on the houseboat.

Best of all, I get to go on fascinating trips with my people. They let me explore to my heart's content and trust me to go up and down the steepest slopes, just as they do. They both enjoy adventure and explore interesting places. I really like living with Jim and Ada. By the way, my real name is Milly, not Meelay.

There are four other people on this Lake Powell houseboating adventure: Gary, Joy, Jim and Darlene. They have all become my friends.

Gary, our leader, makes wise decisions concerning destinations and routes. He is extremely capable at climbing slickrock, but he is also very patient with our less confident climbers. As a professional photographer, he is an inspiration to the amateur photographers in our group. His



Jim Merrill and Ada Hatch in Secret Canyon



Gary Ladd above the Miners Stairs

quick wit and interest in geology, astronomy and the significance of the universe provides thought-provoking conversation.

Joy is a relative newcomer to walking on steep slickrock, but she never complains when the going gets tough. She closely observes things around her, noticing details others might miss. With her senses, she would make a good dog. She is also an excellent cook, according to the others in our group who got to enjoy her lasagna and salmon rolls. Of course, Jim and Ada are good cooks too. Jim makes delicious green chili and baked salmon, and Ada can

successfully do anything she wants in the kitchen. Usually I'm stuck with my dog food, but at least I never beg for a taste of theirs They will offer it if they want me to have it.

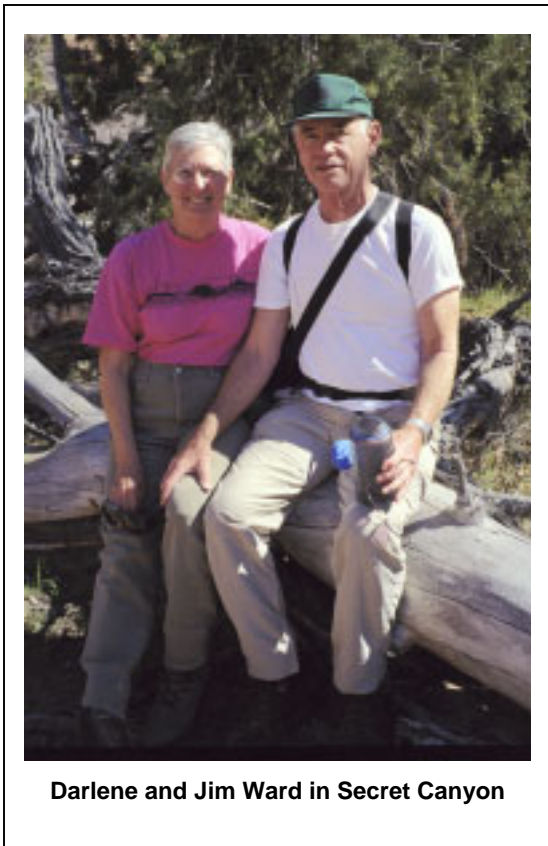
Of great significance to me, Joy has the most comfortable lap I have ever experienced. One night she was stroking my neck when she felt something hard. She pinched one end of it and was amazed to pull out a 1-¼ inch porcupine quill, complete with a black tip. Maybe that's what hit me in Bridge Canyon when I was checking under that dense brush!



Milly and Joy at the helm

Joy Dennis at the Miners Stairs viewpoint

The other Jim seems to excel at cooking pancakes and doing dishes. His analytical mind deals easily with numbers, facts and problems needing to be solved. He also buries anchors as efficiently as a dog burying a bone. He likes hiking and likes dogs. He has a way of stroking my back that I really appreciate. Because I lost my right front leg last summer when I was hit by a truck, Jim likes to call me "Tripod." Gary suggested that I might be called "Major Powell" because Major Powell lost part of one arm in the Civil War. Just as he didn't let a missing arm slow him down when he explored the Colorado River, I don't let a missing leg slow me down. I don't care what they call me, just as long as I get to go places with them.



Darlene and Jim Ward in Secret Canyon



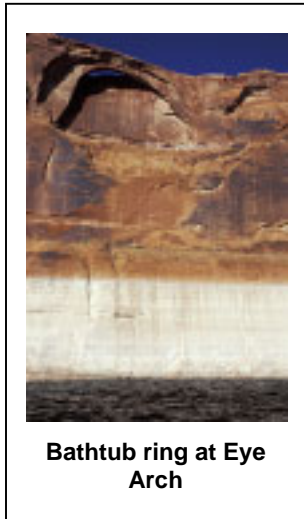
Tripod



Darlene and Milly on a hike

Darlene likes to meet people and she obviously enjoys exploring outdoors. She is enthusiastic about hiking, boating, looking at plants and taking pictures. She fiddled with her pictures on the computer using something she called Photoshop. I liked it when she praised my soft fur, my brown eyes and the way my ears prick up when I am interested in something. She also enjoyed watching my tail wave around in the air when I was busy exploring the terrain. It seemed as though she was often pointing her camera in my direction. She suggested that Ada might write a story about hiking and the natural world from my point of view. In fact, that's when I decided to write this story. I borrowed pictures from Jim and Darlene.

Now that you have met the people in our group, I'll tell you about our adventures. Although early March was rainy, the storm ended as we began our eight days on Lake Powell. Due to recent droughts in the western states, Lake Powell was down to 50 per cent of capacity. The bathtub ring was about 90 feet high on the cliffs. There was a vigorous breeze and sunshine with fluffy clouds floating around on the day we left Wahweap Marina. Due to low water, we had to take the longer passage through the Narrows to Padre Bay, instead of going around Castle Rock.



Bathtub ring at Eye Arch



Padre Bay, pictured from the top of our moving houseboat



Gunsight Butte

We trailed Ada and Jim's Sea Sport cruiser behind the houseboat to use for day trips on the lake and to explore canyons. We spent the first night on a sandy beach at Dove Cove, and then we parked the houseboat on a beach between Cornerstone Canyon and Dangling Rope Marina for the next six nights.



Trailing the Sea Sport behind the houseboat



Our Beach near Mile 41 and Dangling Rope Marina

We all agreed that we were in an ideal location, especially when we discovered there was no hot water on the houseboat. When a worker at Dangling Rope Marina heard our communication with Wahweap Marina about the hot water, he hurried over to fix the problem. Apparently there was corrosion on a contact in the water heater. I didn't realize the man was coming, and suddenly there was a stranger on board. Doing my duty, I barked ferociously.



Sunrise in our cove

The effects of weather and time-of-day changes were dramatic. One day there were storm clouds, but the other days began with the rising sun creating an intense orange color on the cliffs above us. The intensity didn't last long, but it was a great beginning for the day. Gary slept in a tent at the top of the beach in front of the houseboat, and when it was very windy we wondered if his tent might go flying. It never did, however. One night Ada assembled a campfire on shore and we enjoyed the crackling blaze as we watched the brilliant stars overhead and practiced the technique Gary had shown us for locating the Andromeda Galaxy. Of course, I cuddled up on Joy's lap, keeping both of us warm and cozy.

Ada really likes to have clean windows to look through. She wonders why anyone would go out on the lake for lovely scenery and then put up with a dirty view. She got busy cleaning on the first morning of our trip. The cruiser got the treatment later in the day.

We used the cruiser to travel to various canyons where we hiked. Each hike had a stated destination, but traveling there was just as interesting as arriving there. Some people think the desert is empty, but it is full of fascinating sights, smells and little creatures. The humans kept stopping to examine things just as I did, although they didn't roam as widely.

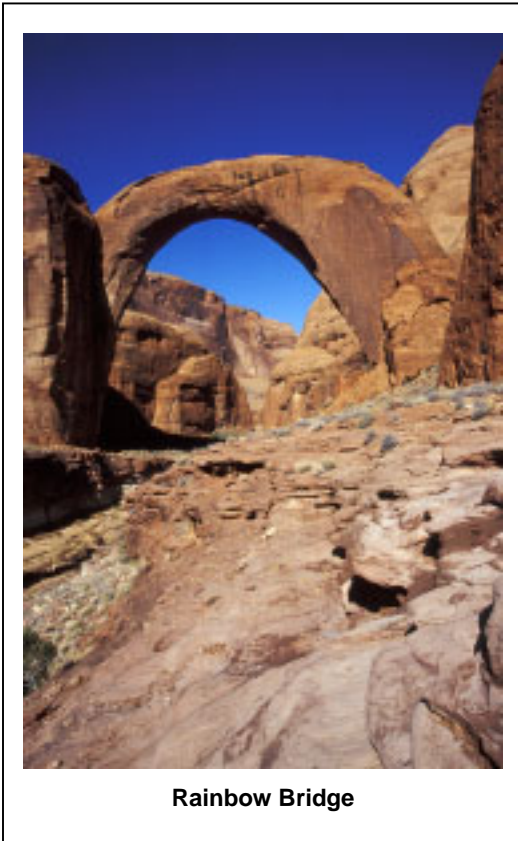
The longest hike we took was to Guy's Eye, an arch that a friend of Gary's discovered in 1988. We started by admiring Rainbow Bridge, and then we hiked the trail that leads up the canyon. There was no one else in Bridge Canyon that day, although we saw one set of fresh footprints.



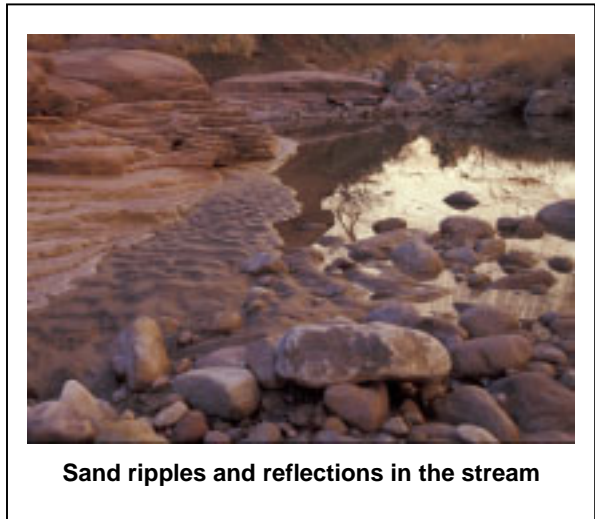
Ada at work



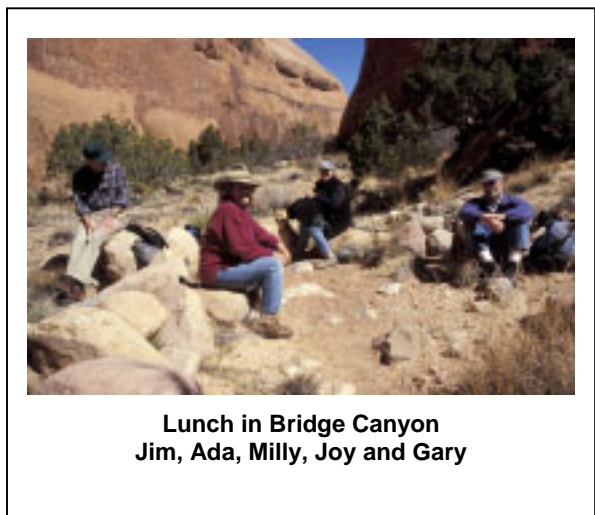
**Oops! She caught it!
And she didn't fall!**



Rainbow Bridge



Sand ripples and reflections in the stream



**Lunch in Bridge Canyon
Jim, Ada, Milly, Joy and Gary**

We followed Gary's lead to a chimney in the sandstone. Gary rigged his rope for others to climb, but I had to suffer the indignity of being lifted. How unsettling! Most places I can get to on my own.

We spent a lot of time at Guy's Eye. I looked through it, and then followed Ada to the top where she stood on her head. I wasn't a bit worried, because she has done it before on other arches, but she made Jim and Darlene nervous. Everyone took her picture.



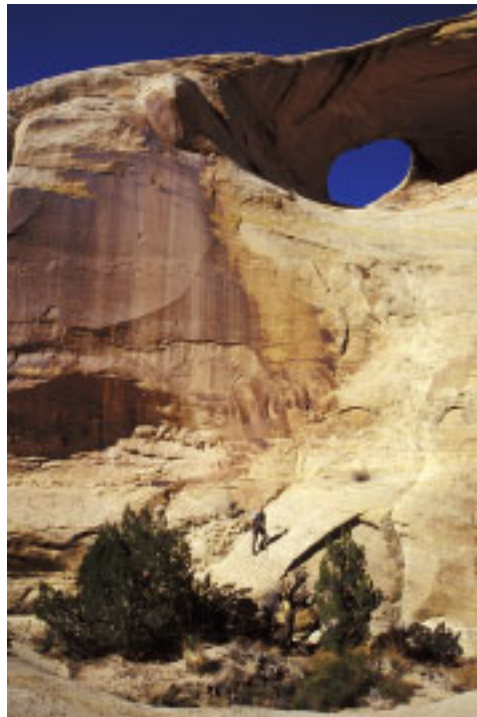
Ada standing on her head



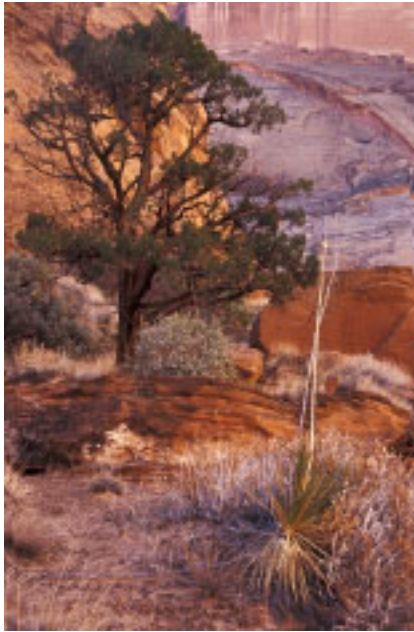
Joy uses the rope on a steep slope



This was not fun!



Guy's Eye from below



A magical light in Bridge Canyon

The hike down Bridge Canyon in late afternoon was especially memorable. Sunlight reflected from the red sandstone walls on our right, creating a warm glow of light around us as we followed the trail on the shady side of the canyon. Pools of water appeared golden in the reflected light, and plants were an intense green against the orange-red sand. Everyone's skin had a healthy ruddy glow, and we forgot to feel tired. Gary mused that, although he had spent many hours in similar red rock canyons, he always forgets how beautiful they are, especially at this time of day.



Gold!



Seeps and golden water

Our group strung out along the trail, with photographers trying to capture the magic and everyone seeing special things to remember, such as handsome trees silhouetted against the orange walls; a glittering seep oozing into golden water; seedpods dangling from redbud branches; plush green moss growing at the base of a tree; and one long, dead cottonwood trunk, silver with age, twisted on the ground like some ancient bone. At one stream crossing, Darlene thought she spied a reflection of Kokopelli, the humpbacked flute player from our ancient ancestors. Then suddenly the light and magic were gone, and it was good to see Rainbow Bridge ahead. We were glad to find Jim and our boat waiting at the dock. The hikers estimated they had traveled eight miles, but I may have gone twice as far as I scouted to the sides of the trail. Once we were on the boat, I snuggled in my sleeping bag in the bow compartment, content to be warm and quiet after such an exciting hike.



Redbud seedpods



Elegant moss

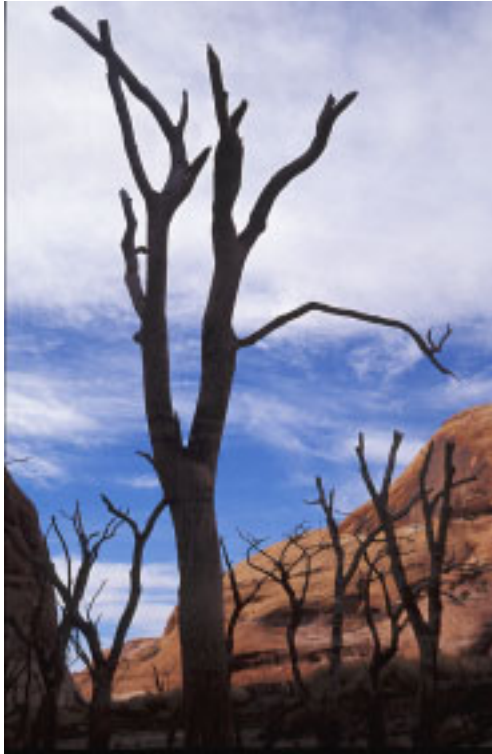


Old cottonwood trunk

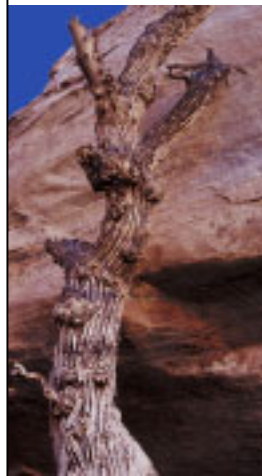


A fleeting glimpse of Kokopelli's reflection

The next day we took the cruiser to Reflection Canyon. We nosed ashore on a steep sandy bank, with tall barren cottonwoods and short oaks silently watching. Usually these drowned trees are under water, but this year they are standing tall in and near the water's edge. A stream descends through the canyon, wandering around the skeleton cottonwoods.



A majestic Reflection Canyon sentinel



Standing in water



Drowned trees



Two Jims with tumbleweeds that pile high on the canyon floor

Some of us hiked to the ruins that are just above the high-water mark, about a mile from where we beached. A trail led up the side of a sand dune and then to a rocky ledge below the ruins. Ada noticed foot and handholds ascending to the crack above where the ruins were located. None of us wanted to try them out, however. I entered a dark crack in the rock wall, disguised by desert varnish streaks, but there was nothing there.

Nearby we found some beaver dams, and upstream there was a pretty little waterfall, but the thing of most interest was under a bush at the side of the trail. I dug and dug and almost got it—whatever it was—but Ada told me we had to go. Now I'll never know what was there, but I obeyed. However, when we were almost back to the boat I had to wait for the photographers to take pictures of trees, so I could have kept on digging. I waited patiently though, since it is part of my job, as a dog, to make sure that everyone gets back safe and sound.



Ruins in a crack in the wall above a sand dune



Where are the beaver now?



I dug and dug and dug



Reflection Canyon pool



The stream in late afternoon

The following day the hikers decided to seek Moepitz Canyon. Jim took them to a spot near Anasazi Canyon where they found a way up the cliff. Gary offered his rope to help the less-confident hikers get up a crack and a steep slope. Ada never needed the rope, and I had no problem. Somehow I manage with my three legs to do everything I used to do with four. In fact, sometimes three seem less confusing!

Speaking of confusion, I wonder what the Anasazi would think if they saw my tracks. I now make the neatest groups of three paw prints. Would they think some new animal had infiltrated their territory? I bet they would figure it out quickly, for the sand is still somewhat damp and my prints are very clear. They would recognize that a dog had made them. Then they would recall the legendary dog, Meelay the Intrepid, who lost a leg defending the greatest chief of all time. It happened during a

Oh, but I was telling you about the trek to Moepitz Canyon, not my daydreams. Jim (not my master) and I went high on a sandstone dome to watch the others wend their way up from the lake. Later Joy concluded that Jim was feeling a “pancake high.” He had made pancakes and sausages for breakfast and was now clambering around on the rocks with an exuberant energy. I had to hurry to keep up since he wasn’t distracted by all the scents that I notice when we’re out hiking.



The top-of-the-world view that Jim and I saw from our sandstone dome



Jim and I watched the hikers ascend the steep rock: (left to right) Gary, Joy, Ada and Darlene



Joy and Gary discuss our route to Moepitz



Jim W. hikes through sandstone domes below Navajo Mountain on the way to Moepitz Canyon

Gary warned our group to look carefully at our route, for we weren't on a trail and we needed to know the way back. We kept going up and down slickrock, sometimes having a grand view of Navajo Mountain and other times surrounded by sandstone domes. There were finally a few rock ducks as we neared Moepitz. Gary led us to a small waterfall cascading from bedrock into a deep hole before continuing on in the sandy streambed. The hikers had lunch on the ledge above the waterfall, appreciating the sinuous rock shaped by rushing water that was now stilled to a trickle. During the little time we had to explore upstream, I found some holes in the rock reflected in the quiet water, so naturally I had to go see if there was anything in them. There were just a few pebbles here and there.



The hikers relaxed and ate lunch on the rock shelf above the small waterfall



I crossed the stream to check out holes in the sandstone wall

We saved time by taking a slightly different route back, but we still had to descend the steep slopes to the lake. Jim and the boat were waiting for us, and we were soon headed back to the comfort of the houseboat.



Darlene uses the rope, Gary belays while Ada and I watch



Joy descends the last crack to the lake



Jim decided to use the rope this time

Although we didn't hike as many miles as we had in Bridge Canyon, we decided that going up and down sandstone slopes was more tiring than hiking on a trail. It was interesting to see how much more confident on slopes people were by the end of the day. I think I am the only one who took a tumble. I was standing on a rounded boulder above a puddle when my front paw slipped and I fell on my ear on the sand at the edge of the puddle. I shook my head and went on, but for a moment I had a flashback to the momentous day when I lost my leg.

It was early morning, the cooking fires still smoldered and the voices of the people were quiet as they began their daily chores. A group of braves were going to traverse the high route to do some trading with the clan to the east. I was to go along with them, so I waited while they packed their gear. Then we went up into the sandstone domes and reached a point where we could see for miles, although we were careful not to be silhouetted against the skyline. We all admired the view and then the braves discussed their planned route. Suddenly I saw movement in the sandy ravine to the west. I stared intently and saw a shadow flicker briefly and disappear. Someone was there where no one should be, and they didn't want to be seen! I nudged the leader of the braves and looked pointedly to the ravine. He recognized that something was wrong, but he didn't know what I had seen. All the braves moved back into the shadows in the rocks, and the leader told me, "Go!" I was quickly on my way to see who was there. I reached another point where I could look down into the canyon, and I didn't like what I saw. There were marauding braves from another tribe stealthily making their way towards our camp!

I rushed back to our braves and used my body to indicate that they needed to return to camp. They understood and hurried back, taking care not to be seen by the others. I was able to move faster and lower to the rocks, so I arrived at our camp before they did. I ignored the women and children and went straight to the chief's shelter. I whined anxiously and made short moves in the direction of danger. He quickly went into action. He ordered the women and children to hide in the rocks, and he sent me to the nearby ledge to bring the braves who were not in the trading party. By this time the other braves had arrived. The men took up defensive positions in the outlying rocks and waited quietly. Their plan was to deflect the marauders before they could reach our camp.

When we saw a brief movement, I and the other camp dogs set up a horrendous howling. Our braves added their voices, and the marauders knew they had been detected. They hesitated and we advanced, our chief leading the way. We were on the high ground, and they were in a canyon, so they decided this was not a good day for a contest. They retreated and we gave chase. We kept after them for more than a mile, so they would know that ours was not a tribe to mess with.

On the way back, our chief was feeling proud of our braves. He patted us dogs on the head and kept saying, "Good dogs!" Perhaps exhilaration momentarily blinded him, for he took a step where he shouldn't and suddenly went sliding down a long, steep slope. We all were petrified and then relieved as we saw him stop on a small ledge next to a big boulder that was perched there precariously. We saw that he scarcely dared to move for fear of slipping off the ledge, which was really just a slight swelling in the sandstone. One of the braves had a rope made of vines from the canyon by the sacred bridge, and he called to me. He gave me one end and said, "Here. I know you can do it!"

I gripped the rope tightly in my jaws and edged gingerly down the start of the steep slope. It seemed like it was vertical! I kept my eyes on the slickrock in front of me and searched for slight indentations for my feet. Slowly, slowly and carefully, I made my way down. Suddenly I was sliding too, but I bumped up against the boulder next to the chief and he reached out for the rope, grabbing it just as the boulder and I slid right off the ledge. The chief was safe, but the

boulder and I bounced down the cliff. I thumped onto the sand below and immediately the boulder pounded down next to me. I was dazed, and then I realized I couldn't move my right front leg. It was trapped under the boulder! Then everything went black and I don't know how the braves managed to get down to me, how they managed to get me out from under the rock or to carry me back to camp.

As the haze cleared, I saw the Chief looking into my face. "Once again, Meelay," he said, "You have shown the intrepid courage of your forefathers. You have saved my life! This tribe will honor you forever. Your name is now Meelay the Intrepid."

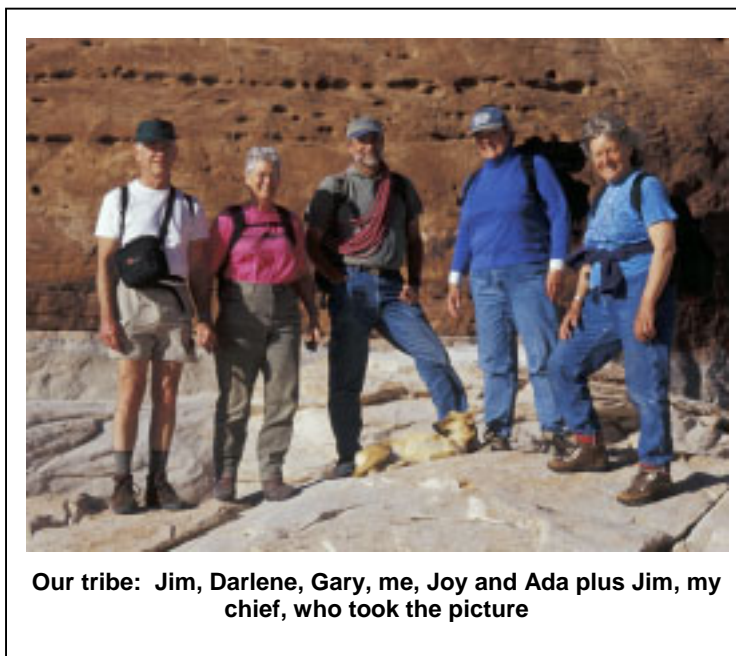
I felt very proud, but I was also very weak. I couldn't seem to get up. One of the braves said, "Rest a while, Meelay the Intrepid. You will soon be feeling stronger and will run once again."

I lay back on my fur bed with a sigh. When I thought about how I couldn't get up, I looked down at my legs to see what was wrong. I seemed to have a bandage on the right side of my chest. Where was my leg? Was it folded up under the bandage? Right now I was too tired to puzzle about it any more.

I woke up again a little later. The brave nearby offered me some water. This time I was able to get up, but it was awkward with the bandage on my chest. The water tasted good, and the brave stroked my back, saying, "You'll soon be as good as new. You'll show all those other dogs that three legs are as good as four!"

Now I knew why I was bandaged. There was no leg folded inside. I am now a three-legged dog. However, I would show those other dogs that I am Meelay the Intrepid. I was proud to have saved my Chief and there was still a lot to do to serve my people. I love them all!

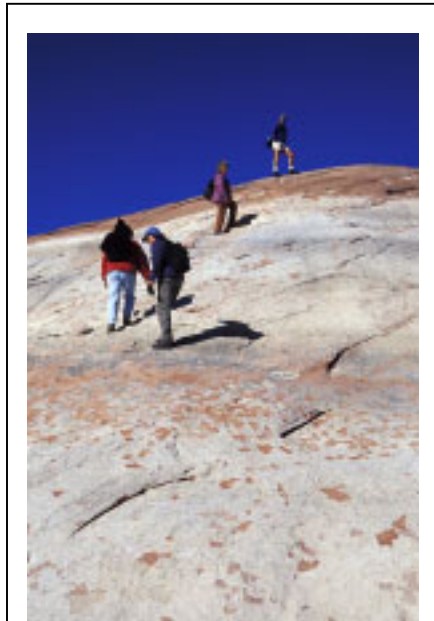
Well, that's how it *might* have happened. My hikers couldn't know my daydreams, but they must know that I feel like they are my tribe. They are all my people and I love them. I will do whatever I can to make them happy.



We had more adventures to share. The hikers climbed the Miners Stairs high on a sandstone face that sometimes is partially under water. Before there was a lake, miners hewed sets of stairs into the rock at the steepest places on their descent to the Colorado River to search for gold. Part way up the route, our hikers found a great spot for lunch, complete with comfortable sitting rocks and a view across Lake Powell to Navajo Mountain rising majestically above the sandstone domes that we had explored on our way to Moepitz Canyon.



The Sea Sport took us many interesting places



Ascending Miners Stairs: (from top) Gary, Ada, Joy and Darlene



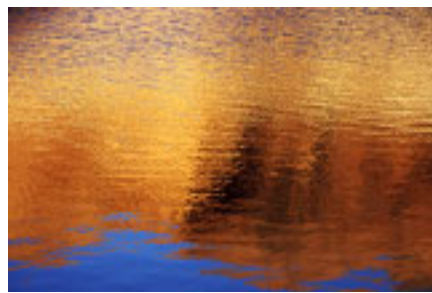
Ada at Miners Stairs rest stop with Cathedral Butte beyond



Jim and Darlene at Miners Stairs rest stop



Navajo Mountain as the sun sets



Ripples and cliff reflection at sunset



Lizard tracks

We crossed the lake and explored Oak Canyon by boat, fending off the steep walls when the canyon got narrow. When we were at Guy's Eye, Gary had mentioned that it was possible to hike cross-country and drop down to the lake at Oak Canyon. We were curious to see what the route would look like at the end of Oak Canyon.



Sinking sand in Oak Canyon was a surprise for Ada

We ran into sand, driftwood and a little running water before reaching the end of the canyon. Ada stepped off the bow to explore. When her feet started sinking, she called to Gary for help. After he tried out the sand and kept sinking, we decided that hiking in Oak Canyon was out of the question. Jim had to back the boat out of the canyon until there was room to turn around. Due to its design, the boat can turn on the proverbial dime, but the canyon was very narrow.



The view near the lake entrance of Oak Canyon



Oak Canyon is mislabeled "Secret" on Jones' map of Lake Powell



Gary tested the sand too



Ada pushed on the wall and said, "Oh, yuk! It's slimy!"



Jim and Gary ready to fend off in case the boat gets too close to the walls while Jim backs out in narrow Oak Canyon

Our next stop was Secret Canyon, where we walked across sand dunes that are usually under water. The place where Ada, Jim and I beached our houseboat last Thanksgiving was high and dry now. We hiked up the canyon to view the Moki Steps carved into the sandstone, leading to the top of the cliffs towering above us. Although Gary and Ada had gone up them before, no one was tempted to try on this trip. In fact, soggy ground and brush now makes it difficult to get to the steps. As we explored, we filled a bucket with trash and Gary filled his pockets with golf balls. I checked out all the scents along the way.



Just checking to see what's here



**Jim, Ada and I made footprints in the sands of time in Secret Canyon
(Do you see me far away on the right?)**



**Once you have seen the camel, you will
return to Lake Powell**

Too soon, in everyone's opinion, it was time to go home. We dug up the anchors, rocked the houseboat a few times and managed to float away from shore with the aid of the cruiser. We headed back past the Camel, through Padre Bay and around Antelope Island to Wahweap Marina. Our trip was over. I missed my "tribe" when everyone returned home. Maybe they'll remember that there are a lot of canyons still out there that need to be explored.

Meelay the Intrepid is ready to go whenever they are.



**Our happy crew returns to Wahweap Marina:
Milly with Darlene, Jim Merrill, Ada, Joy and Gary.
Jim Ward took the picture with Ada's camera.**

Note

Darlene was wondering, ever since we wrote the opening paragraph to this story, just how I was going to protect my Chief and lose my leg. She couldn't quite figure out the main event. Suddenly one morning she woke up and *knew*. She sat right down at her computer and started typing the long sequence of my daydream that begins: *It was early morning, the cooking fires still smoldered and the voices of my people were quiet...*

A week later she was amazed to read the news article about the hiker near Canyonlands who was pinned by a large boulder and, after five nights, had to cut off part of his arm in order to get free. My daydream wasn't so far-fetched after all!

