



In Search of Eldorado

Day 60

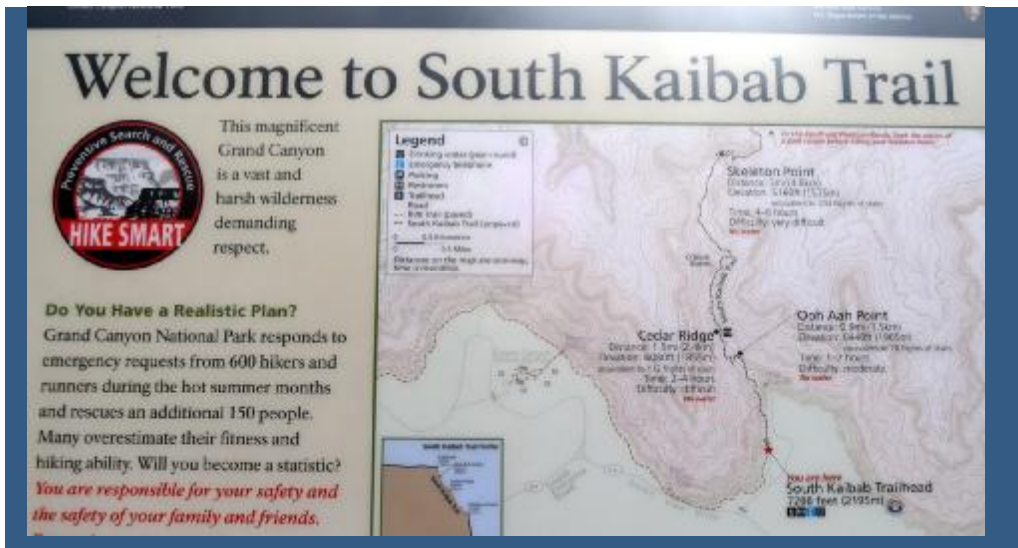
Tuesday

March 5th

Grand Canyon
National Monument

Weather

50 and Sunny



Hello to Family & Friends

Fat Tuesday – Happy Mardi Gras

My first thought today was to hike the remaining Rim Trail from Mather Point to the Village, but after watching the movie in the VC I changed my mind. It's going to be a nice day, so I will hike the Kaibab Trail. Elevation at the rim -7200 feet, elevation at the Colorado River – 2600 feet, a drop of 4600 feet.

Heh, heh. I am not going all the way though, Ooh Aah Point is at 6440 and Cedar Ridge is at 6080, a drop of 1120 feet in 1.5 miles. I will see how I feel at Ooh Aah Point.

With this change of plan I had to get the bus back to the RV, add more water, add more snacks, grab the second hiking pole and the tripod, catch the blue bus back to the VC, and catch the orange bus to the trailhead. Because of this I lost about an hour and a quarter. I determined to hike down for an hour only, because I figured it would take twice as long to hike back up.

The bus was crowded and the sign said "trail is icy, crampons recommended". For those not aware of what crampons are, they are spikes that strap to your shoes and make walking on ice much easier. I don't have crampons. But neither did 80% of the other hikers, and it looked like some of them carried no water either. There were a lot of nice clean tennis shoes that came back brown and mudcaked.

Eldorado

By Edgar Allan Poe

Gaily bedight,
A gallant knight,
In sunshine and in shadow,
Had journeyed long,
Singing a song,
In search of Eldorado.

But he grew old—
This knight so bold—
And o'er his heart a shadow—
Fell as he found
No spot of ground
That looked like Eldorado.

And, as his strength
Failed him at length,
He met a pilgrim shadow—
'Shadow,' said he,
'Where can it be—
This land of Eldorado?'

'Over the Mountains
Of the Moon,
Down the Valley of the Shadow,
Ride, boldly ride,'
The shade replied,—
'If you seek for Eldorado!'

The view from the Trailhead



If you look closely you can follow the trail across about seven switchbacks before it disappears. Look for the people.



Definitely below the rim







Well that popped up pretty quick. Guess I'll try for Cedar Ridge.

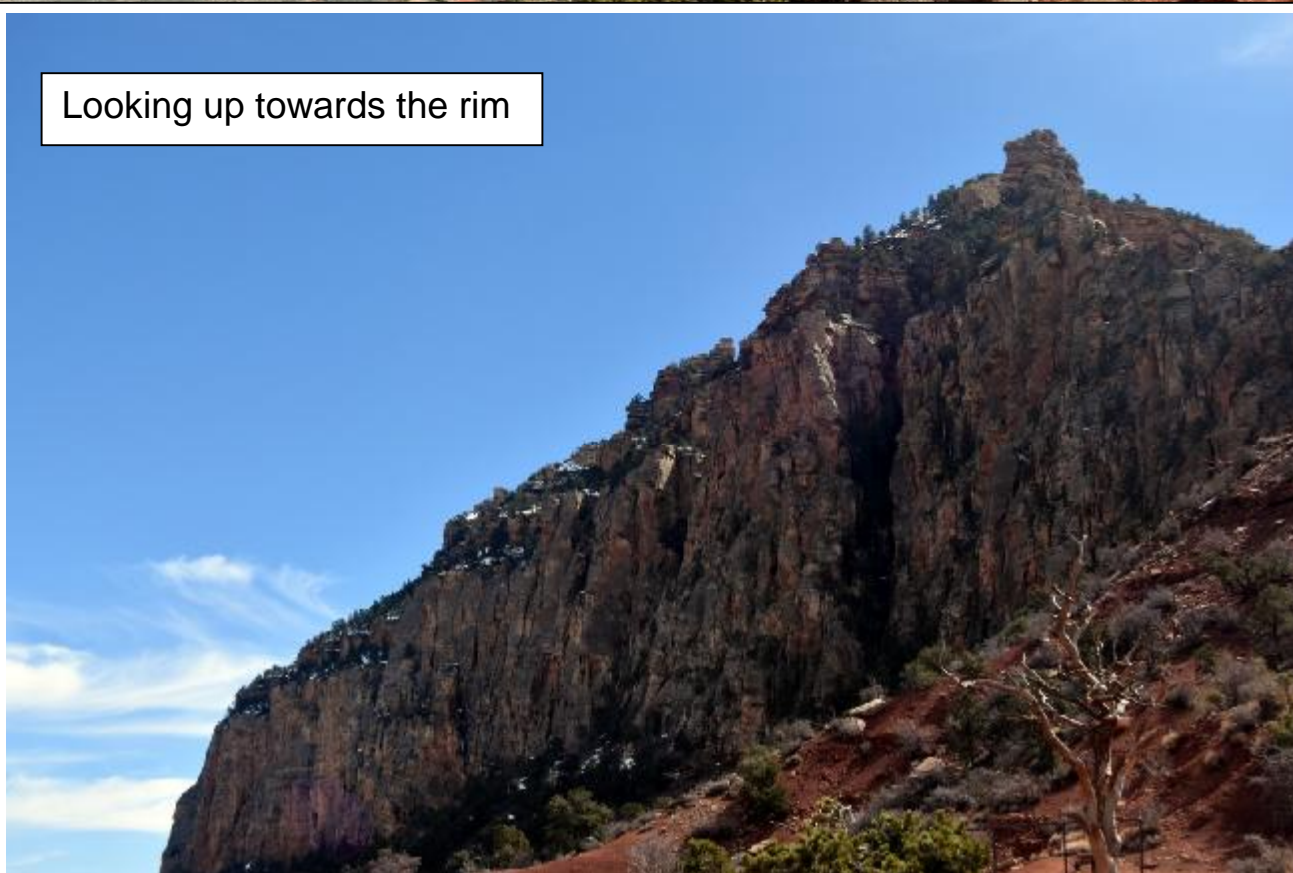




I think the photo above looks pretty darn good. The sign, the cedar tree, the clouds, The Grand Canyon. It only took an hour to get here, and I spent a good ten minutes at Ooh Aah Point waiting for people to move away from the sign for the picture. Below is looking east.



Looking up towards the rim





I found a nice young lady to take my picture. Which one is best? One?

Two? Or.....



Three? I kinda like the clouds in this one.



Lunch time view

I was not the only one who marveled at how green everything is.





What came down, must go up. The trail back to the rim.

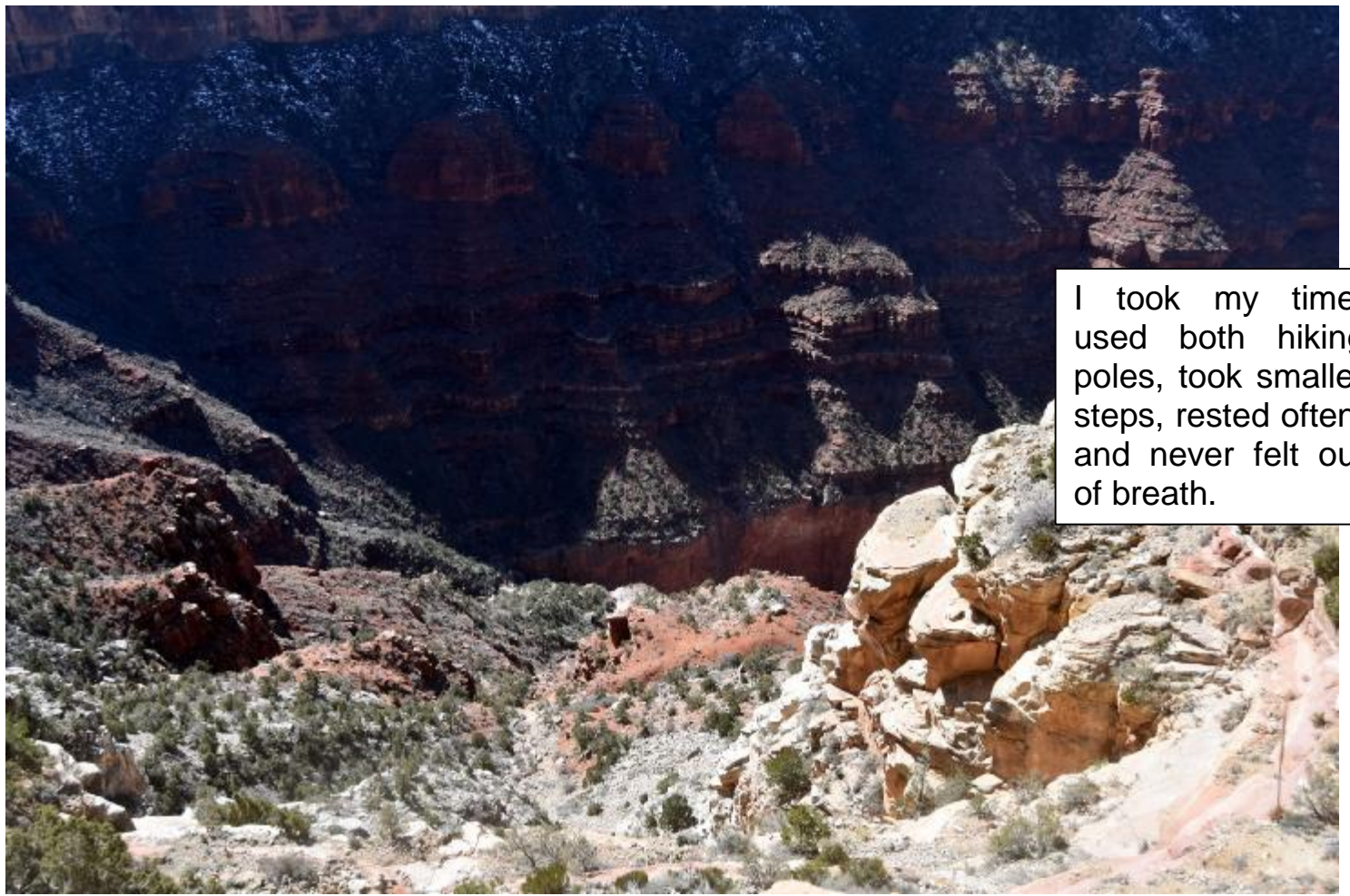


The young lady in maroon appears to be in charge of this group of volunteer rangers. Their job today? Clear rocks from the trail. I sat and watched for about five minutes while they attempted to move this one-ton boulder by hand over the edge of the trail. I recommended they move it downhill about twenty feet to an opening. I don't remember this boulder being here when I came down.



Back at Ooh Aah Point. Obviously I was not alone on my hike today. This is the most popular hike in Grand Canyon National Park.





I took my time, used both hiking poles, took smaller steps, rested often, and never felt out of breath.





I can't decide which of the next two photos is best. I found a little alcove to back into and these were the result. I think they turned out....different.





It took me maybe an hour and twenty minutes to get back to the top. I felt real good. I looked back down and noticed this pack train making its way up the trail, so I waited and grabbed a couple pictures. I can only assume they use the same method to pump out the restrooms at Cedar Ridge. I was wondering about that when I was down there.



I took the orange bus back to the VC, the blue bus back to the RV, and took a good hot shower. The temperature rises three degrees for every thousand feet you descend into the canyon and I think it was over sixty down there. I needed the shower.

I ate an early dinner because I was very hungry, then took the bus to the El Tovar Lodge, browsed the gift shop and admired the paintings. By now it was time for another sunset. There are plenty of clouds tonight and I stayed at Hopi Point this time with a good view.



The last of the sun in the canyon,
then the sun hit Hopi point



Moses would be proud
of this burning bush



It turned out there were too many clouds tonight, especially low on the horizon. The sun never lit up the bottom of all those clouds above.



Kind of neat with the jet in there though.

Overall, another good day at The Grand Canyon. I exceeded my expectations with how quickly and efficiently I completed a hike that is rated as Hard on AllTrails. There was a lot of huffing and puffing by people half my age, but I felt strong, Like a Rock. Sorry, I couldn't resist. Like a Rock, a Bob Seger song.

Tomorrow I will hike the other portion of the Rim Trail, all paved I believe, check out the Geology Museum and visit all the buildings at The Village.

I almost forgot to mention that on the bus from the Kaibab trailhead back to the VC a little boy named Seth sat next to me, maybe four or five years old. He talked non-stop the entire way. He made me hold on to the seat in front of me for safety, and when I wasn't holding on tight enough, he told me to hold on tighter. The questions were non-stop and he didn't always wait for an answer. Do I have a tractor? Yes, a lawn tractor. Do you like mountain lions? Yes I do. Have you ever seen one? No, but I would like to. I have, in the zoo. And so on. When the bus turned right we had to lean to the left. When we turned left we had to lean to the right. I held him up so he could see an elk. It was hilarious. He even wanted to take my hand after we left the bus. Both grandparents and parents thanked me for the break.

Until next time.....