



A HISTORY OF THE GVR HIKING CLUB

Second Revision -- February 1997

SPRING 1981 - After an organizational meeting with GVR when Jane and Bill Necker suggested a hiking rather than a walking group, an ad in the local paper brought out 35 hikers on August 20 for a Nature Trail Hike in Madera Canyon led by the Neckers. They agreed to hike to Josephine Saddle in two weeks. This established the pattern of meeting at West Center North parking lot on alternate Thursdays, carpooling to trailheads, and recognizing miles hiked with patches. The first moonlight hike to Sabino Canyon, patterned after an Audubon Society outing, was done in 1983.

SPRING 1984 - The Club continued to grow with 80 to 90 hikers at times. To assure continuation, the club became an official GVR Charter Club complete with By-Laws, March 26. A quarter per person per hike was collected to cover expenses. The Board agreed to sponsor the care of the Nature Trail in Madera Canyon in cooperation with the Forest Service. (The Arizona Parks and Recreation Association awarded a plaque to the club for work done on the trail for the handicapped in October 1988.) All are invited to help on the trail the first Tuesday of each month.

Later in 1984, assuming individual hikers would still go every other week, the Board decided to have a hike every week. Everyone turned out every week! In January 1985, two hikes per week were offered and repeated the following week with the same leaders. "Rules of the Trail" and "Hike Leaders' and Sweeps' Outlines" were formalized. Cameron Beckwith's recommendations for orientation to hiking, hiking boots and plenty of water played an important part in the small number of hiking "incidents". Our motto became "Dedicated to Safe and Enjoyable Hiking."

Autumn 1985 - A and B hikes began. The B hikes, more leisurely to provide time to smell the flowers and see the birds, would still be for substantial distances and elevations. Hikes were limited to 40 with overflow hikes arranged when needed. By November 1986, hikes were limited to 35 people. Hikers were required to go on two B hikes before an A. C hikes were added in November 1987. A monthly bulletin listing hike schedules was made available.

Winter 1989 - By February 1989, four hikes a week were scheduled through the middle of April since overflow hikes were needed almost weekly. In 1989 a special hike on the Friday after Thanksgiving was begun. Designated the "President's Special", it is always led by the current Club president. A flexible schedule was adopted in 1990 to provide three to four weekly hikes in spring and fall and up to seven hikes during the busy winter months. Since 1990 no June hikes have been scheduled. This provides time for the hikemaster to organize the schedule for the new season. Two hikes each Thursday are conducted in July and August.

Planning - The hikemaster is kept busy preparing the year's schedule of hikes, assigning leaders, preparing monthly bulletins, and scouting new hikes. Consider the planning to provide a variety of weekly hikes, each with appropriate degree of difficulty, maintaining a balance of hike leader participation, some balance of travel distance, and seeing that all is in order from signup sheets to first aid kits. It is a big job that has evolved and is being handled smoothly with the help of an Assistant. Bob Lund deserves a lot of credit for fine-tuning our well-run organization.

The development from 22 hike possibilities in 1983/84 to over 250 hikes in January 1997 has resulted from many hours of planning, scouting, training new leaders, and cooperation from many members. We have an average of 24 leaders and eight assistant leaders. The assistant leader plan began in October 1992 to reduce the load on leaders and give training for future leaders. Hike Leader Emeritus status has been awarded to a number of retired leaders.

PATCHES - Information on hiker participation is recorded in a computer and may be retrieved through search criteria. The Records officer handles the patches and should be notified if a GVR number changes.

POTLUCKS - The first potluck, May 4, 1986, at Desert Hills, accommodated 68 hikers and guests. When the club grew, so did the potlucks, and the location was changed to West Center. The Social chairperson welcomes all hikers to participate on the committee. Three potlucks are held each year in November, February and April.

PRESENT ORGANIZATION - Reports for the year are given to the membership at the annual meeting. Three new members are elected to serve three years on the Board. Developing from an approved motion at the May 12, 1992 annual meeting to find the best way to help the Club meet the problem of ever increasing membership, on November 18, 1992 the Board approved an Orientation and Registration program to begin in January 1993. The program informs prospective hikers about the club and instructs them about water, rules of the trail, footwear, etc. Attending O and R is a requirement before hiking with the club.

DUES - To simplify operating procedures and provide support on a continuing basis, the policy of annual dues was initiated starting in January 1995. This replaced the system of a quarter in the can at signup time. Dues are presently, in 1997, \$8.00. Paid up members with four hikes have voting privileges at the annual meeting held in April. In 1996 members numbered 384.

Since the first history of the Club was written in the spring of 1988, many changes and innovations have come to pass. Leaders receive CPR and first aid training, the club has a logo, stationery, a post office box, a Directory of Members, the Trail Tales newsletter to keep hikers informed about club news, a Leaders' Guide to Hikes, provision of the Boy Scouts' wreath at Josephine Saddle to name a few. Recognition dinners for leaders, sweeps, board members and trail maintenance volunteers have been given in 1991, 1994 and 1996. A Club committee decorated a "Hiking Theme" float for the annual parade in October sponsored by the White Elephant. We are helping this year, 1997, with the National Senior Olympics held in Tucson.

Many names could be mentioned for individuals' contributions to the success of our Club. As you hike you realize how many there are.

A TOAST - Again, let us take our extra bottles of water out of our packs to drink a toast to the Hiking Club. Thanks to the Neckers for beginning our Club; thanks to Cameron for developing the early burgeoning days; thanks to ALL those active people who have contributed to the Club, those who are and who will be helping to develop it as time goes by; thanks to the scouts who find new places to hike; thanks to the Hike Leaders; and thanks to all the Hikers who make hikes work. Without you there would be no success story.

Compiled by L.M.