

Bassoonists Have More Fun!!!

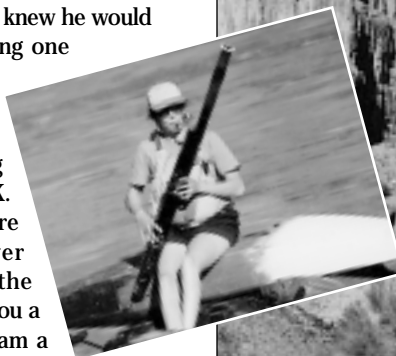
By Wendy Lackey-La Touche
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The beginning of this story dates back to November of 1998. First let me introduce myself, my name is Wendy Lackey-La Touche and I have just completed my first year of doctoral studies at the University of Colorado in Boulder under the mindful direction of the one and only, I.D.R.S.'s past president, Yoshi Ishikawa. Yoshi is the main reason why I study here. I knew he would whip me back into shape after taking one and a half years off from playing my bassoon.

After three months I was finally making progress and my reed making was improving from horrible to O.K. This is when my husband and I were approached to spend 21 days over Christmas and New Years to raft the Grand Canyon. Maybe I should give you a little brief update of my life. Yes, I am a bassoonist, but I grew up canoeing and rafting and have worked for the past eight summers as a white water rafting guide, with the past four guiding on the rivers of Alaska. When I approached Yoshi and told him about my trip, I think he just about flipped out!! This is what I heard: "HOW CAN YOU LEAVE, YOU JUST GOT BACK INTO SCHOOL AND STARTED PLAYING AGAIN!"

Of course this is being rather nice to what he actually said, and the tone that he used. Yoshi is the kind of guy who thinks camping out and roughing it is being in a 3 star hotel with no room service. Anyway, we made a bet. Granted it was a small bet, three lunches, that I would not come back in shape at all. So I took him on. You see, I was planning on entering a concerto competition playing the Mozart. Well, I frantically called around to all the local middle and high schools and was able to find a plastic Fox. I kind of told a white lie as to why I needed to use this bassoon. I for sure was not going to take my Heckel.

Once we got to the put-in and started loading my raft, I took much precaution in waterproofing the Fox. I put it into a dry bag and tied it down on my raft in a place if I were to flip, the Fox would get the least amount of water. When rafting on one of the wildest rivers in the world, you always rig to flip. Anyway, the first week or so I really did not get a chance to play because it was snowing and freezing in the nights. The Fox just layed down on the beach by my raft. By around the tenth day on the river the sun started to



Wendy Lackey-La Touche, Grand Canyon, 1998-99.



warm up things a bit, plus we were going down river towards the desert. I started to play around the campfires at night and on my raft in the days in between rapids. Towards the end of the trip we had several layover days so I was able to practice sometimes up to three hours on my Mozart. Well, needless to say the trip ended and it was time to return back to civilization to take a much needed shower!

I was quite happy to play on my Heckel again after struggling with the plastic thing. Yes, I did return to school in January with the Mozart memorized placing first in the preliminaries; we will not discuss how I did on the finals.

Yes, I can officially say that I rowed my raft down the Grand without flipping; do you know any oboes who can do this? I just wanted to share my adventures with other bassoonists that we really live life to the fullest here in Boulder, Colorado, and plastic Foxes do have their uses!

P.S. Yoshi still has not kept to his end of the bet. ❖