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Subject:

Thursday, September 11, 2008 9:10 PM
Postcard



Yes, today started like yesterday – sunrise over the canyon.

But it was on our way to Bright Angel trailhead. We took a little hike down to Indian Gardens. And back. Which is halfway to the river. There were mule ridin' dudes at the trailhead waitin' to cowboy down the trail and one of them took our picture. Mule ridin' dudes are not picture takin' dudes but I fixed it up on the computer.



It was 39 degrees on the rim. This is the last picture you'll see of us – this is when we still looked pretty good.



The trail goes back and forth and back and forth (those are called switchbacks) and then goes back and forth. It's a better way to go down than straight down, which people occasionally do.



As we went down, the sun came up. The jackets came off, the pant bottoms unzipped, and we began to lose salt and water in earnest. Which we replenished as best we could with Gatorade and snacks.



When you're on this trail there are 3 serious concerns other than hydration and electrolytes. We call them the 3 M's: mules, morons and monsoons. We thought monsoon season was over, but it has apparently

lingered. The weather called for 50% chance of thunderstorms after about 10 AM. That was good news because there is a 90% chance the weather is wrong. It was.

The hike is divided into thirds, with two rest stops between the rim and Indian Gardens and all of them are spaced about 1.5 miles apart. All have water and two have restrooms. Hey, with no way to sneak into the woods, that's a really good idea.



This is the view from Indian Gardens. I guess they call it gardens because the creek that runs through it actually has water in it, supporting shrubs, cactus, and a bunch of cottonwoods. Maybe the seeds from the cottonwoods in our neighbor's yard, the ones that didn't stick in our grass, blew out here and grew.

There's a campground and a little picnic area at Indian Gardens. The picnic tables are sheltered and this one was below trail level with a little room under the roof to see the trail. While we were there we ate lunch (so what it was 10:00, lunch was good) with a couple from Cincinnati. He liked my pack and he liked my GPS and I think he liked Sheila. I only let him inspect the pack and the GPS.



While we were in our little lunch dugout, 3 mule trains went by and there were no more on the trail on the way back. Fantastic! No jumping off the trail, no condescending looks from the ridin' dudes, and the mule poop would only be on the bottoms of our shoes.



Now we're headed back up. Geez this is harder than going down, especially because the temperature is pushing 90. It's also slower than going down. And we sure had a lot less tolerance for the morons. Hey, please excuse us for being on your trail. Morons are fortunately concentrated at the top because most of them are not really hikers. Some have water. Some wear little shoes with straps and lots of makeup. Some carry cell phones and one wore a Bluetooth. One was 90 and walking, sort of, with a cane. They all take the center of the path. Morons.



Everywhere we stopped there was a spotted Grand Canyon squirrel (*el moocho mucho*) and each one was fatter than the one before. They scampered under your table or sniffed your pack or generally made a nuisance of themselves. Enough morons feed them that they couldn't find a nut outside a Planter's can.



It was sure nice to be back up among the bussed-in hordes once again.

D&S