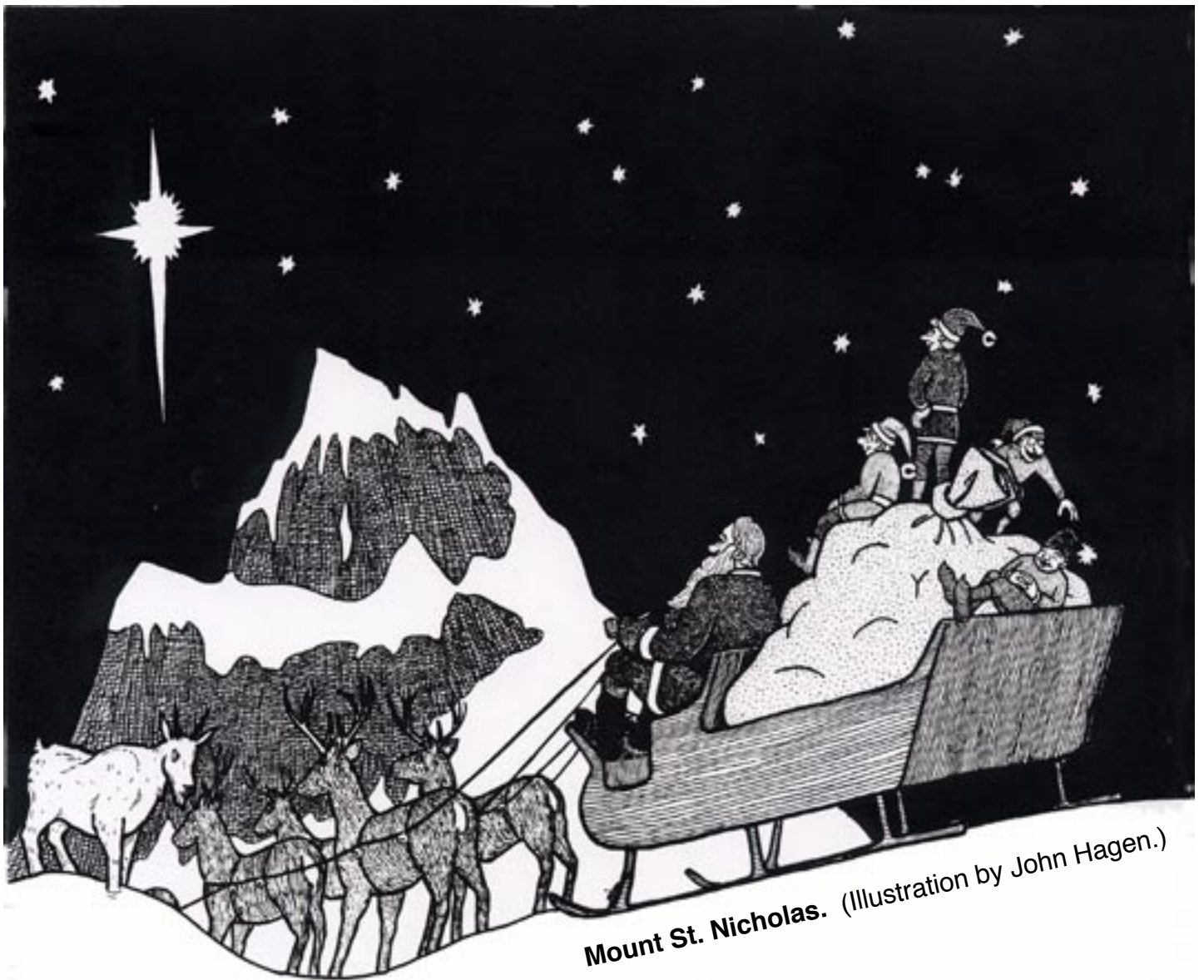


# THE INSIDE TRAIL



Voice of the Glacier Park Foundation ■ Fall 2001 ■ Volume XIV, No. 3



Mount St. Nicholas. (Illustration by John Hagen.)

## Christmas in Glacier: An Anthology

*Also in this issue: The 1936 Swiftcurrent Valley Forest Fire, Hiking the Nyack Valley, Gearjamming in the 1950's, and more!*

# INSIDE NEWS of Glacier National Park

## Lewis Leaves for Yellowstone

Glacier National Park is losing its superintendent for the second time in two years. Suzanne Lewis, who came to Glacier in April 2001, is transferring to Yellowstone National Park to assume the superintendency there. Lewis' predecessor, David Mihalic, transferred to Yosemite after having been absent from Glacier for much of his last two years, pursuing a course of training for senior Park Service executives.

The lack of continuity in Glacier's leadership is troubling in view of the complex issues confronting the park. Controversial decisions must soon be made as to how to carry out the restoration of Going-to-the-Sun Road. Other difficult choices must be made with regard to the future of Glacier's lodges (especially how to conduct and finance large-scale renovation projects) in preparation for the issuance of a new long-term concession contract in 2005.

Lewis has been well-liked by the public and by park staff. She has presided over a key success for Glacier in facilitating the renovation of the park's red buses (see update, p. 24).

## Sun Road Committee Reports

A 16-member Going-to-the-Sun Road Citizens' Advisory Committee issued recommendations to the Park Service this fall. The committee had spent a year and a half reviewing alternatives for renovating the road.

The committee endorsed a "shared-use" alternative which would close the road in some areas during September and October. During the summer months, there would be traffic delays on the road, but never outright closures. The "shared use" plan would take 7-9 years and cost about \$126 million to \$147 million.

The committee rejected an "accelerated completion" plan which

would cost less and take less time. This plan would involve closing sections of the Road on alternating sides of Logan Pass, and could heavily impact local businesses. The committee also rejected slower-paced and more expensive options (e.g., 20 years of work at \$154 million).

The committee's recommendations are not binding on the Park Service. The Service will make a decision on how to renovate the road through an Environmental Impact Statement process. Work is likely to begin on the project in 2004.

## Hotel Survives Hydraulic Jacking

Many Glacier Hotel's main wing was successfully lifted with hydraulic jacks this fall. Work was done to rebuild the wing's east foundation and to correct the notorious sagging and leaning of "Stagger Alley," the lake level hallway.

## Glacier Park Foundation

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The **Glacier Park Foundation** was formed by Glacier Park employees and visitors who have a deep love for this special place. The Foundation is committed both to the importance of wilderness preservation and to the importance of places like Glacier as classrooms where people can experience wilderness in intense meaningful ways, learning not only a love for the land, but also a respect that nurtures the skills necessary to preserve that land. The Foundation has a special interest in Glacier Park's history, traditions and visitor facilities.

*The Inside Trail* takes its name from the famous old trail which connected Glacier Park Lodge with the vanished chalets at Two Medicine, Cut Bank, and St. Mary. The name thus emphasizes the publication's focus on the lore and history of Glacier National Park. We invite submission of historical, scientific, or anecdotal articles, commentary, poetry, or artwork for publication in future issues.

# Christmas in Glacier: An Anthology

For many decades, Glacier Park's lodges have held celebrations of "Christmas in July" (with occasional "Christmas in August" variants, following Yellowstone's liturgical calendar). This section includes brief memories of Christmas traditions at Many Glacier Hotel, Lake McDonald Lodge, and Rising Sun.

## Christmas at Many Glacier

by Carol Repulski Dahle (*Many Glacier 1970-75, 79-80*)

Who among us could forget Christmas in July? One might think it sounds ridiculous - Christmas in July - but to employees of many of our national parks, it's one of the highlights of the summer. Although many of the national parks celebrate Christmas in July, Glacier employees of the 70's and 80's know that there was something magical and special about July 25 at Many Glacier Hotel.

1970, my first summer at Many Glacier, I heard varied stories about the upcoming celebrations. Some said we celebrated Christmas just so we could celebrate New Year's Eve a week later! For a couple of summers it seemed as though that might be the case. The New Year's Eve celebration was a costume party for the employees, a feast fit for a king and queen with enough dancing, laughing, and singing to set the moon and raise the sun! In 1970 my roommate and I found a couple of large boxes, some black and white paint, and we went to the festivities as a pair of dice. One couple went as a brick and a bricklayer. Six housemen went as a 6-pack of beer! By

1972 the New Year's Eve celebration was cancelled due to the employees having "too much fun." That is, if you call someone landing on the food table and knocking it over, and one of the windows in the St. Moritz being broken, fun, then yes, we had too much fun. Ah, such is the way of young, foolish college students. In the ensuing summers the Broadway musical found itself being scheduled on the 31 of July. A coincidence? . . . I think not.

Needless to say, we perennial employees were initially saddened with the loss of our New Year's Eve celebration, but there's generally a silver lining to every cloud. In this case, the silver lining was



*Creating a "Christmas Tree": " Harvey Barkowsky, Carol Repulski, and John Hagen after an all-night session of painting Mr. Hummel's bedsheets in 1973. (John Hagen photo)*

the increased focus and attention on the Christmas celebration.

An integral part of every Christmas celebration is of course the Christmas tree. For many summers arrangements were made to go outside the park to get a tree for the lobby. But one summer there were some legal and technical obstacles that for some reason could not be surmounted, and we found ourselves without a tree the day before Christmas! John Hagen, Harvey Barkowski, and I (there were others I've forgotten . . . SORRY!) just knew we had to come up with an idea that would put a Christmas tree in our lobby. John and I had been working at MGH for a few summers by this



time, and we knew some of the ropes, so to speak. I don't remember who had the initial idea, but with my knowledge of a sewing machine and John's artistic talents, we took two double-size bed sheets and sewed them together end to end. John sketched a beautiful 10-foot Christmas tree complete with decorations, and then John, Harvey, and I stayed up all night into the next morning, painting and painting and painting! After stitching a hem so a dowel rod could be inserted and the tree hung in the lobby, the sun came up as

guests were filing through the lobby on their way to the dining room for breakfast. As they looked refreshed and ready for a new day, we looked bedraggled and worn out! However, their "ooohs" and "aaaahhs" as they appraised our "sheet" tree was music to our ears! (The "tree" was used for a few summers after that, but I don't know where or when it found its final resting place.)

A subsequent summer brought us a 6-foot Santa Claus. The father of

one of our dining room employees was in the business of making and selling Santa Clauses. Mr. Tippet, the MGH manager came up with the funds, and here came Santa Claus! What a greeting for our guests as he stood in the lobby beside the huge copper top of the fireplace!

I remember organizing and hosting the Christmas program for the lobby, posting a sign-up sheet in the cafeteria for employees who wanted to perform on the Christmas pro-



*The Christmas program at Many Glacier in 1975. Performing: Mike Leach and Susie Carlson (in an egg-laying pantomime while singing the "Six Geese A-Laying" stanza of "The Twelve Days of Christmas." On the Balcony: Chris Vick, Ray Kinley, Don and Shirley Hall, Paul Meierding. In the Lobby: Vera Daly, Thelma Thompson, Ian Tippet, Carol Dahle, Harvey Barkowsky, Jim Donohue, Jeff Clark, Tim Vadheim, Mark and Kathy Tyers, Steve White. (drawing by John Hagen)*

gram. The Many Glacier Singers, the Dining Room Singers, and the Many Glacier Orchestra were often part of the celebration.

Talent was bountiful at Many Glacier, and the quality of music performed at Christmas always seemed to be a level or two higher than usual. One of my more poignant memories is being in the lobby getting ready to begin the Christmas program, and hearing the brass ensemble playing Christmas Carols from the balcony, organized and

directed by Terri (Saunders) Stone. It was magical and unforgettable.

Another summer I remember the Housekeeping Department joined the Dining Room for an after-hours Christmas celebration in the Dining Room. There were even bellmen and a few jammers joining us that evening. It wasn't a raucous party, but a simple exchanging of gifts, sharing of food, sitting around a fire, singing, talking, being with friends, and reflecting on the true meaning of Christmas.

The friendships made during our summers in Glacier were intense. With Christmas in the middle of those summer months, it seemed as though we packed 12 months of living into 3 months of summer. Many of us knew even then that moments like these would not happen again, and these were the memories we would be holding in our hearts 30 and 40 and 50 years hence.

# The Great Christmas Tree Caper - *Rising Sun 1973*

*by Richard Bridegroom (Rising Sun 1972-1975)*

Back in my day, we celebrated Christmas at Rising Sun every summer on August 25th. Of course, we had to be different from the rest of the park, as they celebrated Christmas on July 25th. Our chef, Mickey Hawley, insisted on holding it at the end of the summer when things started to calm down and it would give the employees something to look forward to at the end of the summer.

I do not know if the park still celebrates Christmas in the summer, but I remember it as being a great time and something to look forward to each year. Each department would put something on the tree that represented them. The front desk would put folios and room cards on the tree. The gas station would put oil cans and

window washing supplies on, and the housekeeping department would put toilet paper and toilet brushes on. Just seeing customer reactions when they saw a large Christmas tree set up in the lobby area in the middle of the summer was worth it in itself. It created a great time and good memories for all of us.

What made 1973 so different from any other year was how we got the tree that year. We all know that it is illegal to damage the park in any way, which includes cutting down a Christmas tree for park activity. Our manager, "General" Lee, picked four employees and asked us to take the garbage truck and go outside the park and find a nice tree. So off we went and left the park.

We had a great time finding a tree. We took the old road

outside of St. Mary heading up the Triple Divide road heading toward East Glacier. Of course, we had to get a good tree, and we looked patiently until we found the right one. It was found, and the four of us managed to load it into the back of the truck, and off we went. We went slowly down the old road until we hit the new road and drove in to St. Mary.

As we approached St. Mary, I noticed a police car behind us with its lights flashing. We knew that we were outside the park, and as far as we knew there was nothing wrong with the truck. We all got out and faced the officer, trying to figure out what was wrong. Well, it wasn't the truck. We were outside the park, but what we didn't know was that it is illegal to cut down a tree on the reservation! The officer said that

we would have to go with him to Browning to resolve the matter.

We didn't know what to do, since none of us had any money and some of us had to be back at work that evening. We were embarrassed to say the least, and were scared to call the General and tell him what had happened. But like any kid, we did what we had to do and did call the General

and told him what had happened. He wanted to talk to the officer, and we turned the phone over to them to handle the problem.

To make a long story short, the officer let us go back to Rising Sun, but we had to go to tribal court in Browning the following week. When we got back to Rising Sun, everyone had heard what had happened and

called us "the four amigos" and "the jailhouse four." The following week, the four of us plus the General showed up in tribal court and received a suspended sentence. What we learned out of all of this was that you do not cut down trees in the park OR on the Reservation!!! Needless to say, the following years we did not cut down our Christmas tree there!

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## Christmas at Lake McDonald

*by Janet Eisner Cornish (Lake McDonald, 1973-76)*

Upon my arrival, for the first time, at Lake McDonald Lodge in early July of 1973, I was surprised to learn that the employees were preparing for a summer Christmas celebration. The festivities, scheduled for July 24th and 25th, I soon learned, provided an opportunity for employees, far flung during the rest of the year, to share the holiday with their Glacier friends. Its origins were never quite clear, but some believed the tradition was established sometime in the 1930s, when a July snowstorm provided the right setting for Christmas carols and gift giving. I must admit that at first I found myself feeling a bit out of place. Growing up in a home where Hanukkah was

celebrated, I wasn't sure what to expect or how to respond.

My concerns were short lived, however. Although arriving nearly a month after most of the other lodge employees, I was welcomed warmly by the crew. Before my first day at Lake McDonald was over, I was happily immersed in the community of employees, performing in the evening's musical and comedy show and joining my new friend, Leslie Kerr, for a hike before starting my first shift the following day. The gracious and genuine offer of friendship and camaraderie was overwhelming. The desire to share a celebration and gifts with my new found friends followed naturally.

So, a few days before July 24th, a tree appeared in the lobby, courtesy of the bellmen. We decorated its branches with a variety of home made ornaments – paper snow flakes, pine cones, ticker tape from the teletype

machine and a few special decorations brought from the homes of returning Lake McDonald employees. Hotel guests watched in amazement as we prepared for the holiday. Trips to town were directed to the purchase of leather strips, decoupage sealers, fabric, and beads, while back at the lodge, employees worked on crafting treasures. Photographs, smooth stones, pieces of wood and pine cones were transformed into beautiful gifts, each one reflecting something of the place and the people.

On "Christmas Eve" the Lake McDonald employees gathered in the lobby to exchange gifts and present a musical show to the guests, complete with carols and a reading of "The Night Before Christmas" by Mr. MacDonald, the Lodge gardener. Santa Claus (an avid hiker and musician in his own right) was on hand to distribute the presents to employees and various holiday treats to the



*The Christmas Eve program at Lake McDonald in 1973. Janise Peterson and Kirsten Cornish as Christmas elves handing out presents beneath the lodge's distinctive Indian-pictograph lanterns. (photo by Leslie Kerr, from the collection of Janet Cornish)*

guests. The gifts were remarkable, and nearly all commemorated Glacier Park and Lake McDonald in particular.

My experience as a concessions employee in Glacier National Park in the 1970s is defined in large measure by the friendships that were forged. Relationships were formed easily and quickly, yet had uncommon depth and intimacy. Now, nearly thirty years later, the friends that I made during the summers of 1973-76 at Lake McDonald Lodge continue to be part of my life experience. Today, in the back of dresser drawers and tucked in between the pages of photograph albums, I hoard the treasures that I received from my dear friends at Lake McDonald – a jewelry tree made of a piece of driftwood, a small log with the words “Miss – Information” burned on its face, folded bits of paper with song lyrics and poetry, and a book of special knowledge that every front desk employee should never be without.



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*Mr. MacDonald, the Lake McDonald Lodge gardener, reading “The Night Before Christmas” at the Christmas Eve program in 1973. (photo by Leslie Kerr, from the collection of Janet Cornish)*



# The Night Before Christmas

## *Many Glacier 1956*

by Lloyd J. Seilset

[Editor's Note: Lloyd Seilset and his wife Gjerta managed Many Glacier Hotel for several seasons in the 1950s. At Christmastime — the real Christmastime — Lloyd would circulate a poetic card to the previous season's employees. This 1956 poem is from the collection of Jackie Biebighauser Bakke. Thanks to Jackie and Liz Gehring Coddington for helping to identify the various named employees.]

'Twas the night before Christmas; the hotel was closed tight,  
The lobby, so cold, was a terrible sight,  
Cover-sheets everywhere and cobwebs galore,  
And all was stillness, not even a snore.  
As I stood there and listened, of course in my dreams,  
I heard voices and laughter among the huge beams.  
The fires were crackling; the bellmen ran fast  
To bring in the luggage with the busses' first blast;  
Zippety zoo and zippety zip,  
They knew if they hurried they might get a tip.  
The line was forming to register in;  
The room clerks were straining to grant every whim.  
The dining room tables were fast being set  
To serve the dudes meals they would never forget.  
RHODY<sup>1</sup> was busy peeling some beets;  
SELVALA<sup>2</sup> was hurriedly shaking some sheets.  
FAYE<sup>3</sup> was running up and down stairs  
While PLAGGE<sup>4</sup> was selling some old souvenirs.

ALICE and MARY<sup>5</sup> were eating their dinner  
And RAY<sup>6</sup> was trying a new kind of spinner.  
WILD BILL<sup>7</sup> was telling a whopping big one  
While MRS. SEILSET asked, "Where the wind came from".<sup>8</sup>

From out on the lake came a beautiful sound,  
'Twas PLAGGE and his violin<sup>9</sup> paddling around.  
And what do you know, a razz a ma tazz,  
From down in the grill came progressive jazz.  
The dorm was all lighted, MRS. DALY<sup>10</sup> was there  
Not gone real crazy, just tearing her hair;  
From floors above, noises of millions of hammers  
Just girls discussing their Glacier Park jammers.  
The boys next door living quite sedate lives  
Only now and then a throwin' their knives.  
BOB MEGARD<sup>11</sup> was busily shooting a gorge;  
Posed in the foreground JUDY and DOUG  
GEORGE.<sup>12</sup>

MORRIE LANPHER<sup>13</sup> was tearing his hear  
He had sold ten tickets for horses not there.  
At the front desk a mother and daughter  
Were rolling their eyes at DEANE KNOX and  
CHUCK PORTER<sup>14</sup>.

KAY<sup>15</sup> and some boys were climbing a cliff  
Had MR. SEILSET worried quite stiff.  
In a huddle intent were DICK MAYER<sup>16</sup> and SANDY<sup>17</sup>  
Checking the transfer of a bottle of brandy.



Lloyd and Gjerta Seilset (with ukelele) beside the Many Glacier fireplace. (photo courtesy of Jackie Biebighauser Bakke)



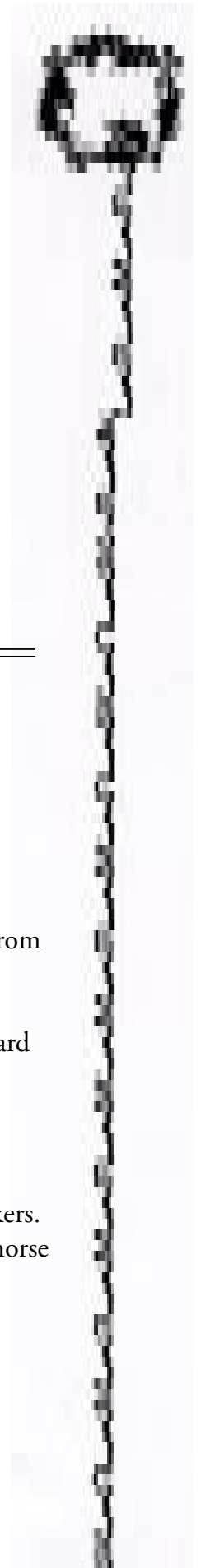
A couple of housemen were running real quick,  
Because of a leak they needed MERLE WICK.<sup>18</sup>  
GEORGE HILLARD<sup>19</sup> now in his jeep took a cruise,  
MISS MAYER<sup>20</sup> upstairs had blown a fuse.  
TALL HARRY<sup>21</sup> thought there was nothing nicer  
Than to put his finger in BUTCH'S<sup>22</sup> meat slicer  
Because he knew that a badly cut fella  
Would get TLC from our nurse MARCELLA.<sup>23</sup>  
The rest of the gang were gathering chow  
To go to the hydro for heap big pow-wow.  
When all of a sudden with a complete change of view  
I knew I'd been dreaming of last summer and you.  
'Twas nice while it lasted. Alas and Alack!  
But, I hope that next season will find us all back.

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## Footnotes

1. Minnie Rhody, Many Glacier's legendary and formidable chef.
2. Arthur Selvala, manager of the laundry in the days when Many Glacier still washed and processed its own bedsheets.
3. Faye Bassford, long-time Many Glacier housekeeper.
4. Nicknamed "The Plague," Mr. Plagge managed the gift shop.
5. Alice Krueger and Mary LaGrandeur, dining room hostesses.
6. Ray Kinley was an employee (at this point, the night clerk) and a fishing guide at Many from 1922 to 1977.
7. "Wild Bill" Jose, the kitchen porter.
8. As host of the Lobby Sing, Gjerta Seilset led guests and employees in singing "The Wayward Wind," among other numbers.
9. During the winters, "The Plague" was a violinist with the Minneapolis Symphony.
10. Vera Daly, at this time the women's dormitory matron, later the hotel seamstress.
11. Head bellman.
12. Doug George, the assistant manager, and Judy George, "Miss Information," were avid hikers.
13. Transportation agent, principally responsible for buses, but also a seller of tickets for the horse concession.
14. Knox and Porter were room clerks and evidently intergenerational heartthrobs.
15. "Kay" was a man — Rangvald Kvelstad ("Mr. K"), the kitchen storekeeper.
16. Grill manager.
17. Alpheus Sanderson, the mail clerk.
18. Indispensable handyman.
19. Engineer.
20. Camille Mayer, the auditor.
21. Harry Lohman, a kitchen worker.
22. The hotel butcher.
23. The hotel nurse.



# Gearjammer



Twelve red buses line up at Belton Chalet (West Glacier) to load a departing tour on the Empire Builder in 1953. (James Monson photo)

## Deadhead Races, Dusty's Tavern, and a "Desperate Journey"

by Dr. James W. Monson (*Glacier Park Transport, 1954-1953*)

This story is about the best job I ever had. I drove a red tour bus in Glacier National Park during the summers of 1952 and 1953.

In those days all the bus drivers were college men who were required to be at least twenty-one years old in order to obtain a Montana chauffeur's license. All hiring was done by the word-of-mouth recommendation of former drivers. I was in dental school at the University of Minnesota and belonged to a professional dental fraternity. Several of my friends in the fraternity had driven buses in previous years and wouldn't stop talking about it. When Fred Noble, the transport company manager, came to St. Paul on his annual hiring trip, they introduced me to him and

I was hired. As soon as school was over in early June we left for the park in an old car belonging to one of the guys. It wouldn't go over 50 mph, so it took us a long time to negotiate the 1200 miles to Glacier. There were no freeways in those days and we couldn't afford to stop in a motel so we drove straight through. I think it took about twenty-seven hours. When we arrived at the park we were assigned buses (mine that first year was number eighty-eight) and we started washing and waxing them. It took a couple of days to do that. It's amazing how much surface there is to polish on a bus. We also had to take our Montana driver's tests.

The buses were really unique. They were built to order by the White Motor Company in the

late 30's. They seated fourteen people on four-abreast seats. Each wide seat was accessed by a door on the right side of the vehicle. The buses had four forward speeds and reverse. Like all trucks and buses of that time they had to be double-clutched while shifting. What that meant was that to go from one gear to another you had to first depress the clutch, shift into neutral, momentarily let the clutch out and then depress it again to shift into the next gear. Shifting up was easy enough, but downshifting required that the engine be gunned while in neutral to match engine speed to the rolling speed of the bus. It was not easy at first, but came with practice. I can still do it! The bus engines had governors on them that limited the speed in fourth gear to about 45 mph and in third to

about 20. Brakes were mechanical. Hydraulic brakes were just coming in during the late thirties and many cars didn't have them at that time. Power brakes were many years in the future. The mechanical brakes were almost useless for stopping a loaded bus or one going downhill. We were very careful to control our speed going downhill by using the engine as a brake. We downshifted from fourth to third gear for all descents. The speed would hold at about 22 mph no matter how steep the hill. The tops of the buses were open, so people could stand up if they chose. For bad weather there was a canvas top which was stored in a well at the rear of the bus. We called the buses our "big red convertibles".

The drivers came from all over the country. There was a group of us from Minnesota, a group from Williams College in New York, some from Salt Lake City and some from California. A few of the names that I remember are: Tom Larkin, Ken Shipstead, Harley Raykowski, Ty Prior, Doug McClain, Earl Jorgensen, Earl Nash, Hal Henkel, Dick Oliver and Rhys Williams. Drivers didn't wear uniforms during my time there. We were required to wear a white shirt and tie and decent slacks. If it was cold we could wear any outer clothing we chose. Also optional were the aviator-style sunglasses and the leather driving gloves that completed the image of the dashing bus driver.

Some of the place names have changed in recent years. The old system called the hotel at East Glacier the Glacier Park Hotel (even though it wasn't actually in the park) and we called it GP. The west entrance, where the train station was, was called Belton. Now it is West Glacier. The Lake McDonald Hotel was about 12 miles into the park from Belton, Many Glacier Hotel was in the middle of the park and the Prince of Wales Hotel was in Canada in the Waterton Lakes National Park.

The Glacier Park Transport company was separate from the Glacier Park Company which ran the hotels. Mr. Hays was the owner of the transport company and Fred Noble was the manager. Each hotel had a resident agent who was our boss while we were at that hotel. At East Glacier and Many Glacier we had dormitories with a cook and mess hall. At Lake McDonald we slept in a tent and ate in the hotel employees' mess. At Price of Wales in Cana-

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*This story is about the best job I ever had. I drove a red tour bus in Glacier National Park during the summers of 1952 and 1953.*

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da, we had a waterfront cabin and were allowed to charge our meals at a local cafe. I think we were allowed \$1.25. I remember Sid Couch, the agent at Many Glacier, and Ino Belsass at Lake McDonald. Rhys Williams was the agent at GP my second year. Bob Haase worked in the East Glacier garage and later became the agent

at Many Glacier when Sid retired. A rather gruff fellow named Gene was the chief mechanic at GP.

We lived a very nomadic life. At our transport company compound at GP we had a room where we could leave things, but most of our time was spent on the road. There was a locker in the back of the bus where we kept our clothes and our sheet blankets. When we arrived at any of the other destinations there were cots available but there was no bedding. We used our sheet blankets and the lap robes from the bus to make up our beds. Often we would be away from East Glacier for weeks at a time. Our schedules were determined by the "lineup". The rule was first in - first out. Because there might be more buses at a place than were needed that day, the ones that were there the longest went to the head of the lineup. The first buses out went on the longest and most preferable trips, those over the Going-to-the-Sun

highway. Those down the list would go on the shorter trips, do garage duty or have time off. We were required to have a certain amount of time off by the ICC, so we were given it wherever it fit into the schedule. The trips over the pass were the most fun and the most lucrative tips-wise, so we all wanted those. At GP and

Many there was a lineup board on which our bus-number tags were hung in order. At the other places the lineup was kept in the agent's head. Sometimes if there were too many buses at one place or if they were needed at another we had to deadhead (without passengers) to the other place. If we were deadheading from Lake McDonald or West Glacier to East Glacier we went by way of US highway no. 2 which formed the southern border of the Park. It was not a route that we ever drove with passengers and we usually deadheaded in groups. We had some great races over that road. In my second year I had one of the two buses that had a fifth gear (109) and I could pass most of the others with it.

Gearjamming was the only job I've ever had where it was more fun to work than have a day off. We had been given a lot of training about the history of the park, the scenery, the Indians, the animals and the flora. We kept up a fairly steady commentary as we drove. My first bus didn't have a PA system so I just shouted. The second one had a microphone that hung around my neck. We talked about the scenery and the wildlife, about the fires and the floods and about the Indian legends. A lot of what we said wasn't always completely factual I'm afraid, but we tried to make it entertaining. We stopped often to let people take pictures. Sometimes with a congenial group we could get a songfest going. The

group tours were the most fun. The people had been together for awhile and it was easier to establish rapport with them. Almost all trips were made in the morning. We delivered our passengers to each hotel in time for lunch. At East Glacier there was a short afternoon trip to Two Medicine, a scenic valley nearby. At Lake MacDonald we took the people to the rail station at West Glacier in the afternoon.

Interestingly enough, the big hotel at East Glacier was not in the park at all but was on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation about two miles from the park border. In the early fifties it was not legal to sell alcohol to the Native Americans. I think it was served at the hotel, but I don't remember. Of course bus drivers were not allowed to drink publicly, so we would never have done so in the hotels. About two miles down highway 2, just outside the reservation there was a roadhouse called "Dusty's" where

it was legal to serve liquor and beer. We often walked or hitchhiked the distance when we were at East Glacier. On one occasion while deadheading along highway 2 we managed to get several buses into Dusty's parking lot for a picture. The favorite night-time activity at the other hotels was the "pow-wow". We would go to the campground and sit around a campfire and sing all the old songs. Often there was a libation called "purple passion" which was made from gin (or whatever we could get), grapefruit juice and grape juice. Those were pretty innocent days for most of us and it was rare for anyone to drink to excess and the girls didn't have to worry much about preserving their virtue. Gearjammers tended to have girlfriends at more than one hotel. Again, mores were different in those days and dating several different girls was acceptable.

It was absolutely verboten to pick up hitchhikers while dead-



*Jammers deadheading over Highway 2 stop to pose at Dusty's Tavern in 1952. (James Monson photo)*



heading. Of course the hotel employees were often on the roads with their thumbs out. They were our friends, so how could we pass them up? One day, as I was returning empty to Many Glacier from the Prince of Wales, I picked up a couple of Many Glacier employees. I was very careful. I let them out just short of the US-Canadian border and picked them up again on the other side so the rangers wouldn't report me. Unfortunately, as I was on the road between Babb and Many Glacier along came Sid Couch in his car (with one of the drivers driving). Sid was almost blind, but he always saw what he wasn't supposed to see. He remarked, "Who was that up there with Monson?" Strangely enough, I never heard a word about it from him.

Our days off were usually spent hiking. Glacier is a hiker's paradise with hundreds of miles of scenic mountain trails. I had never hiked before but was hooked the first time I tried it and I have continued this love of hiking into my golden years. The company and the agents encouraged our hiking because it helped us to learn more about the park. Time off was often arranged so we could hike in groups and we could ride the buses to the trailheads and back. I still think Gunsight Pass was the best hike and I dragged my family over it more than once in later years.

Besides the red buses, the transport company had a fleet of limousines that were used for

important people. Second or third year drivers were often assigned to these "specials". They were big black seven-passenger Buicks and Chryslers. Tips were good for the specials. There were also a couple of very old (1920's) touring cars that were no longer used for passengers, but were used as agent's cars or for local errands. They were in wonderful condition and I have often wondered what happened to them. They would be worth a fortune today.

During both summers that I worked in Glacier movies were made in the park. The senior drivers were assigned to drive the limousines that were used to transport the actors and big shots. During my second year I drove for Victor Mature, Vincent Price, William Bendix and others. They were all very nice people and were easy to be with. I drove William Bendix to Cutbank (50 miles) to pick up his family at the air-

port and we talked along the way about the park and the Blackfeet reservation. On the way back he explained it all to his young daughter. The movie turned out to be a real disaster called "Desperate Journey". I saw it many years later on television. Many of the drivers were pressed into service as extras in the movie for which we were paid ten dollars.

As I said at the beginning, It was the best job I ever had. I've often thought, wouldn't it be great if I could drive a red bus over the pass just one more time on a sunny, warm day with a bunch of happy people.



*Gearjammers prepare to steam-clean their buses at East Glacier in September 1952. (James Monson photo)*

# NYACK

## Hiking Adventure in Glacier Park's Great Southern Wilderness

*by John Hagen (Many Glacier  
1970-80)*

In the heart of Glacier's backcountry, full of history and romance but seldom visited, lies the beautiful Nyack Valley. Like Lorien in **The Lord of the Rings**, this lovely woodland is girded around on all sides by wilderness and water, easily glimpsed from afar but arduous to visit.

Most Glacier veterans have viewed the Nyack Valley from U.S. Highway 2, across the Middle Fork of the Flathead River. Many have stared down into the valley's upper reaches from the trail between Dawson Pass and Cut Bank Pass. But the valley is so remote and so isolated that only a handful of hikers have ever actually set foot there.

### History of the Nyack Valley

Ironically, the Nyack Valley was one of the major corridors for travel through the region in bygone eras. Cut Bank Pass was used by Indian scouts and war parties crossing the mountains — by Blackfeet raiding westward and Kootenais and Salish raiding eastward. Pitamakin (Running Eagle), the legendary Blackfeet warrior maid, is said to have led war parties over this pass and down the Nyack Valley.

Red Eagle Pass, which connects the Nyack and St. Mary Valleys, also was a legendary Indian trail. In 1858, a furious battle took place there as Blackfeet pursued a Kootenai band that had been camping on



*Hikers ford the Middle Fork of the Flathead River with a rope to begin a trek through the isolated Nyack Valley. (photo courtesy of John Hagen)*

the shores of St. Mary Lake. The Kootenais (accompanied by white scouts who had antagonized the Blackfeet) managed to drive off the attackers and escape down the Nyack Valley.

A number of expeditions travelled from the Flathead River up Nyack Creek and over Cut Bank Pass. A.W. Tinkham reconnoitered in 1853 in search of a transmountain railroad route. Mistaking Cut Bank Pass for Marias Pass, he reported that it was not a suitable route for constructing a roadbed.

An army detachment from Fort Shaw (near the present Great Falls), commanded by Lieutenants Charles Woodward and John Van Orsdale, travelled eastward through the Nyack Valley in 1873. Just a few months earlier, Yellowstone Park had been established as the prototype American national park. Van Orsdale first made the proposal that the Glacier area should be "set aside as a national park."

In 1883, the Harvard geologist Raphael Pumpelly led an expedition of eminent scientists up Nyack

Creek to Cut Bank Pass. Among other diversions, he and his colleagues climbed Mt. Stimson (10,142 feet), the hub of the valley and the second-tallest mountain peak in present-day Glacier Park.

Soon after the park was founded in 1915, a ranger station was built close to the mouth of Nyack Creek. The nearest bridges over the Middle Fork were miles to the east and west. The Park Service used a basket on a wire across the Middle Fork as a primitive means of access to the station.

At some point prior to 1910, the name “Nyack” became attached to the valley. The word (meaning “point” or “corner”) apparently is of Delaware Indian

origin. Jack Holterman, author of “Place Names of Glacier Park,” suggests that the name may have been bestowed by Delaware Indian scouts who accompanied early white explorers.

### Hiking into the Nyack Valley

Hiking into the Nyack Valley is an amphibious adventure. The trail crosses many fords which range from ankle-deep to thigh-deep (or deeper), often on sharp or slippery stones. A well-prepared hiker carries an old pair of shoes with good treads for use at the fords, and continual changes of footwear rank with one’s strongest memories of the valley.

The most imposing ford is the first one, across the Middle Fork of the Flathead. The river

is broad, about a hundred feet across, and moves quite swiftly. At midsummer, it is about thigh-deep, but contains some deeper channels and holes. The bottom is made up of heaps of slippery, shifting rocks which can abruptly pitch you off balance and soak all your gear.

The best route for crossing the river changes from year to year, as the spring floods shift the underwater rocks around. The Walton Ranger Station often can give hikers useful advice on where to make the Nyack ford. The general area for crossing is the old Nyack village site, on a lane which turns off Highway 2 above a horseshoe bend in the stream.

Having crossed the Flathead and entered Glacier Park, one quickly encounters the Boundary Trail which follows the riverbank. A few hundred yards along it, one reaches a second ford, across Nyack Creek. The creek is substantial, and the ford across it is likely to be thigh-deep.

While sitting on the creekbank changing shoes in 1977, I had a remarkable wildlife experience. A bald eagle glided down the stream and passed within ten feet of my face, its wings outspread and nearly motionless, riding the currents of the breeze.

Just beyond the ford, the Nyack Creek Trail intersects the Boundary Trail and passes upstream into the valley. One can follow this trail for a few miles in and out as a leisurely day hike, or







*John Hagen and Paul Hoff study the cataracts near the mouth of Nyack Creek in August 1979. (photo courtesy of John Hagen)*

*Submit your own favorite backcountry tale for an anthology on "Hiking in Glacier" in our Spring Issue.*

continue far up the creek, which extends for more than twenty miles.

### **The Nyack/Coal Creek Circle**

In 1979, five Many Glacier employees hiked the 38-mile Nyack/Coal Creek Circle in the course of a single day. The party included Barb Kaiser (now Burch), who probably set an all-time women's distance record for Glacier Park, Steve Bergen, Paul Hoff, Hervey Smith, and me.

We started from Many Glacier about 5 o'clock in the morning, drove the long winding route down the east side of the Park, crossed Looking Glass Pass, and went up Highway 2. We reached the old Nyack townsite at sunup, and scouted the riverbank for the ford. The Walton ranger's information had not been precise, and every route across the Middle Fork seemed to be marked by holes or channels of deep blue water.

We had brought a hundred-foot rope along, and I tied one end to my waist and splashed across at the likeliest-looking point. The deepest channels were hip deep, and the current was strong, but I barely managed to avoid slipping on the rocks and being pitched in over my head. With the rope in place, the rest of the party was able to wade across more securely, holding onto it as a guide.

We crossed the second ford and started up the Nyack Valley Trail. The creek flows through several impressive deep gorges, with water frothing in torrents and cataracts. A beautiful mist rose over these gorges in the light of the rising sun.

As the morning drew on, we passed Threetops Mountain and Threesuns Mountain and began to circle Mount Stimson. Stimson rises more than 6,000 vertical feet from the valley floor,

and displays impressive tiers of cliffs. I was reminded of Gordon Edwards' story (in "A Climber's Guide to Glacier National Park") of climbing down Stimson at night without a flashlight, "feeling our way down the cliffs."

We ate our lunch and continued on, changing shoes incessantly to make a series of vexatious fords. The trail would cross the creek and then perversely cross it back again within the space of a few hundred yards. We passed the site where the old Red Eagle Pass trail used to branch off to St. Mary. The trail was largely washed out during the flood of 1964, and is choked with brush and tremendous deadfalls. It looked forbiddingly overgrown, and I felt a wistful twinge of regret at the loss of this historic trail.

The afternoon became densely overcast as we passed the Cut Bank Pass trail junction and



*Dinner on Surprise Pass in August 1979. Clockwise from left: Steve Bergen, Paul Hoff, John Hagen, Hervey Smith, Barb Kaiser. (photo courtesy of John Hagen)*



rounded back southward and westward. We climbed up through forest and underbrush over the wooded hump called Surprise Pass. Through this stage of the hike we were particularly vigilant and vocal, since in that era Surprise Pass was used as a release point for bears which had misbehaved and been trapped elsewhere in the Park.

We ate a hasty meal on the pass and continued down the Coal Creek Valley. The Coal Creek trail passes under many dramatic cliffs and spires, including Mount St. Nicholas (famously the most dangerous climb in the Park), Battlement Mountain, Peril Peak, Caper Peak, Mt. Doody, and the Cloudcroft Peaks.

### **A Space-Blanket Bivouac**

The endless fording had put us behind our projected schedule. We were benighted several miles short of the Flathead River. We passed a patrol cabin in which a backcountry ranger was prepar-

ing his dinner over a cheery fire, and pressed on into the gathering dark.

We reached the riverbank about 10 o'clock. The night was inky black. The river was flowing swiftly under the branches of great cottonwood trees. The ford there — the Coal Creek Ford — was unfamiliar to us, and we were concerned that it might contain deep holes into which a person could slip and be swept away.

We decided the prudent course was to bivouac on the riverbank and then to make the crossing at first light. We had brought along space blankets — lightweight sheets of aluminized polyester film that come in a package the size of a billfold but can cover an adult. We wrapped ourselves snugly in these blankets and went to sleep in the dewy grass. The night was cold, and without the blankets we would have been unable to sleep, but the space-age technology proved its worth.

The film held our body heat and allowed us to sleep quite comfortably until dawn.

At daybreak we crossed the Coal Creek Ford, which proved to be very gentle and shallow. We all had ravenous appetites after trekking the previous day on a diet of trail mix, candy bars and beef jerky. We walked down Highway 2 to the Stanton Creek Lodge, where we ate an enormous breakfast — omelets, mountains of hash browns, and sausage.

After breakfast, two of us jogged five miles down the road to the Nyack ford to retrieve the car that we had left there. We drove back to Many Glacier grateful for this picturesque adventure on one of the wildest trails in the Park.

# TWO GENERATIONS IN GLACIER

## Adventures in the 1920s and 1950s

by Gary Smith (*Many Glacier 1957*). (See "[www.cipeng.org/bgsmith](http://www.cipeng.org/bgsmith)" for more photos)

### Adventures in the 1920s

My Dad (Robert L. Smith Jr.), my Mom (Irene Lee) and her sister (Edna Lee) worked summers in Glacier Park, Yellowstone and Jasper in the early 1920s. My Dad had worked a year at Yellowstone Park before spending four summers at East Glacier, mainly as a bellman. Aunt Edna worked at Jasper one year and then at Lake McDonald as a musician (a cellist in a trio). There was more work for musicians in those days as electronic music didn't exist. My Mom was at Many Glacier for several years and wore an elaborate Indian costume as the dining room hostess.

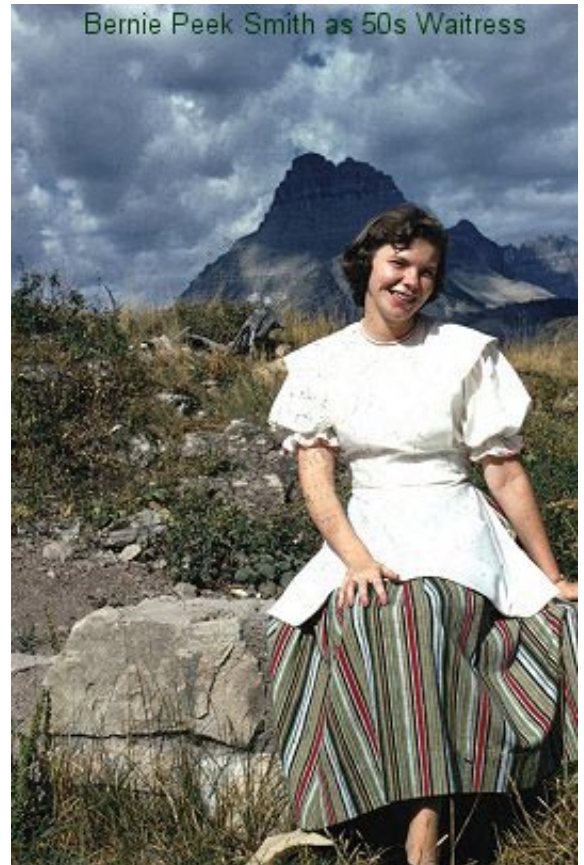
Mom and Dad lived in Minneapolis and St. Paul, respectively, but had never met until their Glacier Park summers. A romance developed and they had their first "date" at Granite Park Chalet. The romance continued "back home" and they were married in 1928 after my Dad finished law school at the U. of Minn.

The only stories we heard from them were mainly from my Mom. She recalled that the hotel wanted a publicity photo of her in her "Indian maiden" costume with the renowned Blackfoot Chief, Two Guns Whitecalf. She was very impressed with his carriage, posture and massive dignity. He sat motionless for what seemed to her like hours as the photographer toiled away endlessly under the

Bob and Irene Lee Smith about 1924



Bernie Peek Smith as 50s Waitress



camera hood with the ground-glass focus plate and photographic plates. Another story was about a fire in the valley that burned for weeks. The firefighters pumped so much water onto the fire that the water level in Lake McDermott (as Swiftcurrent Lake was called then) went down three feet.

### **Adventures in the 1950s**

A generation passed and, in the 1950s, my brother Bruce and I became employees at Many Glacier Hotel. Bruce was a houseboy in '56 and a bartender in '57. I worked as a busboy in '57. One of the waitresses that year was Bernardine Peek ('55, '56, '57). Although the three of us had attended the same university (Minnesota) for years, we never met until the summers at Many Glacier. My relationship with "Bernie" flourished in that magical, giddy atmosphere.

The dining room staff all used shoulder trays in those days. This usually required some attention and focus, but one day (late in the summer, when many "emps" were short on sleep) one of the bus boys dozed off while carrying a tray of dirty dishes to the kitchen. Instead of turning to go in, he just kept walking somnambulistically, out the dining room door, across what was then called the Rainbow Lounge and on down the length of the hallway. When he arrived in the hotel lobby with his tray of dirty dishes and food scraps, he finally "came to" and had to make the long, embarrassing walk all the way back.

My roommate Louie was also a busboy and had a rather whimsical sense of humor. One day the Governor of Montana was visiting and having his evening meal in the dining room. Louie came rushing into the kitchen and over to the dishwashing area shouting excitedly, "Hey, Grant! The Governor of Montana wants to shake hands with the head dishwasher!" Though untrue, this was perfectly plausible, as politicians frequently engage in that kind of PR. Grant, somewhat flustered, began feverishly wiping his greasy, soapy hands. As he was about to head into the dining room, he looked at his attire, turned to a group that had gathered around and asked, "Should I put on a clean apron?" This became a signature line that haunted him the rest of the year. Fortunately, someone stopped him before he marched into the dining room to present himself (clean apron and all) to the Governor.

### **My bat-in-the-dining-room caper**

One August morning during breakfast hours, a bat appeared in the kitchen. From time to time it would flutter about, trying to find an escape and then rest awhile high on a wall. When things slowed down in the dining room, Minnie Rhody, the Supreme Ruler of the kitchen, enlisted the aid of the busboys to try to get rid of it. Most people weren't actually afraid of Mrs. Rhody, but were very anxious to avoid offending her in any way. (Rumor had it that she could stun an employee at 10 paces with a single blow of

her tongue.)

We pursued the little creature diligently and, finally, I made a gentle capture with a dishtowel, expecting to be hailed as a hero. The waitresses in the area, however, insisted that if I had any [manhood] at all I'd turn it loose in the dining room. This was a terrible dilemma for an insecure 19-year-old, as people actually did get fired in those days.

I formed a plan where I would stand just inside the outside door by the fireplace, which was always open and had no screen door, and release it there. My story was going to be (when called on the carpet by management) that I was outside when I let it go and that it simply flew back in through the open door. I was going to bolster the story by shouting at the same time, "My God! It turned around and flew back inside!" I followed the plan, but when I shook the poor creature out of its towel, it flew straight out the door and disappeared! My claim that, technically, I had let it go in the dining room was dismissed as self-serving and not credible. For days afterward I was roundly scorned for my cowardice.

As all summers do, the summer of '57 came to an end. Major changes in management and hiring policies after that summer, along with graduations, combined to make it our final year. But like my parents thirty years before, my relationship with Bernie continued "back home" and we were married in 1960.



# The Swiftcurrent Valley Fire of 1936

by John Turner (Gearjammer 1936-41)

*Smoke from the Heaven's Peak Fire billows over the western horizon hours before it leaped over Swiftcurrent Pass on August 31, 1936 (photo courtesy of Donald Wheeler).*



This was my first summer as a Gearjammer. I had been assigned bus # 57, one of the old original White Motor crankers magneto ignition, sixteen inch wooden steering wheel, acetylene head lamps, brown canvass fold-down top, leather seat covers, rear mounted luggage rack and other creature comfort features commensurate with the 1917 models.

A few of us were having a day off at the Entrance (now East Glacier) when Sid Couch, the dispatcher at Many Glacier, phoned down to Page Stanley, the Entrance dispatcher, to send busses as quickly as possible to evacuate the hotel guests.

The fire had started over on the west side in the McDonald Valley. It was gaining momentum and heading for the east side toward Many Glacier.

There was no time to change into our uniforms. Page dispatched two of us to get up to Many Glacier as soon as possible. The old "Tourings" were equipped with governors, so our speed would be in the order of 40 mph maximum. Of course, some of us had learned how to jump the governors and get up to 50 + mph.

By the time we reached Many Glacier it was late in the afternoon, and the fire had already come over the Garden Wall above Grinnell Glacier and was heading down the valley. The intensity of

the heat was generating a virtual firestorm, and the resulting wind was gaining force as it pushed the fire down the valley toward Many Glacier. . By the time we arrived, most of the guests had been bussed out by the drivers and equipment that were already there. Some of the guests opted to stay and help save the hotel.

With the strong wind it didn't take long for the inferno to reach the hotel area. All gearjammers, hotel employees, Rangers, and guests were now fire fighters struggling to save the hotel, dormitories and Transport garage.

The entire Swiftcurrent Valley, along with Grinnell Mountain and Mount Altyn were ablaze. The wind was so intense across the lake it was literally picking



up sheets of water and misting the hotel structure. Some of us were convinced that this strange phenomenon played a significant part in helping the firefighters save the hotel from burning down. The gearjammers, under the direction of Sid Couch fought the spot fires that were breaking out all around the employee dormitories, the gearjammer dorm and the transport garage. The guest's cars that were usually stored in the garage were all moved out to the parking lot.

The air was filled with red burning debris, cinders, and smoke, igniting one fire after another and making breathing a significant problem. Covering our heads with wet rags helped somewhat. Strong wind gusts made it very difficult to move around and keep balanced.

All phone lines had been destroyed, and the road out along Swiftcurrent Creek became impassable from all of the flying debris and dislodged rocks. So for some time we were virtually cut off from the outside world.

It was late in the evening before the winds finally subsided, the worst was over, and the joyful realization that the beautiful Many Glacier Hotel still standing was apparent.. It was a real tribute to all the hotel employees and guests who fought long and hard against tremendous odds.

Everyone was exhausted, but thankful. There were no serious injuries reported. Just a lot of smudged faces and smoke filled eyes. In only a few hours the whole fabric of the Many Glacier landscape had changed from luxuriant green lodgepole pines to defoliated, smoldering spikes.

But time and the orderly cycle of nature always repairs the damage. This happened 65 years ago, but the experience is still indelibly



*Right: Many Glacier Hotel employees conduct a fire drill in 1936, shortly before fighting the Swiftcurrent Valley Fire with the hoses pictured here (photo courtesy of Donald Wheeler).*



*Above: Ruins of one of the Many Glacier chalets, shortly after being burned by the Swiftcurrent Valley fire (Park Service photo).*

## HISTORICAL

*The tune was Progress,  
so the people paid  
For good, and then  
still better roads  
Where once the ox carts bumped  
and covered wagons strayed.*

*Now trailers de luxe, with  
streamlined sinks and stoves.  
Park on the land  
where ninety years ago  
Indians camped, for hunting  
near these groves.*

*What is left of the wild  
old shooting west?  
No rustlers now,  
no outlaws in the woods.  
There comes instead,  
the drunken dude for pest.*

*Here where the bison ran  
in great stampedes,  
The romanticists born too late  
come wandering,  
Hoping to find an arrow souvenir,  
or pair of antlers  
hidden in the weeds.*

*— by Elsie Williams (1953)*



*Illustration by Tessie Bundick.*

# The Great Green Underwear Caper

by Annette (Haussler) Walker

In 1967, when the rest of the country was heating up around the Vietnam War, civil rights, and a swirl of political activism, there was a place of sustained innocence and peace known as Many Glacier Hotel. It was one of the years when there was an abundance of Texans among the college-age staff. I suspect Mr. Tippet liked us because we were relatively obedient, pretty darn trustworthy, generally loyal, and quick with a “yes, sir!” when asked to perform menial chores. During the early days of the season we were uncovering furniture, taking linens out of storage, putting up signs, and removing huge snowdrifts from the front of the hotel and the balconies (pre-global warming). I was given my first direct assignment from Mr. T: “Miss Haussler, will you please polish the piano in the lobby.” (“Yes, sir!”)

Among the Texans was a particularly beautiful and relentlessly cheerful maid named Mary Ann. Her trademark statement, “Well, gre-a-a-a-t!” (Texas style), cheered any mood, any situation. Equally memorable, for different reasons, was a Montana fellow named Mark (known affectionately as

E!) who daily wore his trademark green sweatshirt. Many of us wondered how (or if) he ever managed to wash it, because he always seemed to be wearing it.

Eventually it came to pass, as the Many Glacier bunch grew to know and, in some cases, harbor affection for one another, that a mob of males stormed the women’s dorm one night in what was in those days known as a Panty Raid. They thundered from room to room rifling through dresser drawers, grabbing bras, undies, stockings, slippers (we wore slippers in those days), and then ran back to the upper men’s dorm with the loot. The outstanding victim of this crime was the beautiful and cheerful Mary Ann, who arrived at the dorm just after the dust had settled and was greeted by her frantic roommates:

“Mary Ann! There was a panty raid!”

“Well, great!”

“No, Mary Ann! the guys came down and went through your dresser!”

“Oh, great!”

“No. You don’t get it. They took stuff!”

“That’s great!”

“No, no! They took a bunch of your underwear!”

“Oh-h-h-h, ... gre-a-a-a-a-t ...”

After the damage had been assessed, we put our heads together and agreed almost instantly that it was time to plot revenge. Which we did. With remarkable feminine restraint, we planned our attack, divvied up the territory, gathered flashlights, suited up in jeans and tennis shoes, ascended the hill in the dark of night, and stormed the men’s dorm. The operation was over in a flash, and the take, which we heaped on the floor in one of our rooms, was astonishing. Shrieking and laughing, we sorted through the pile of decidedly masculine garb — shorts, T-shirts, socks, and what-have-you — wondering what belonged to whom, until we uncovered a pair of green jockey briefs. Whoa, green? Well, that answered that question. E! had managed to wash that sweatshirt, after all! Got a free lesson in sorting laundry, too.

Well, we girls were jubilant at the success of our Jock Raid. With continuing feminine restraint, we decided a powerful gesture of victory was to string the booty on a line and hang it across the horse bridge over the road to the hotel. Which we did. Mr. Tippet was not impressed.

I gave up Texas citizenship in 1970 and became a loyal Montanan in 1973. I still enjoy a tall tale now and then. This one, of course, is completely true!



# Red Bus / Gearjammer Reunion Update

by Leroy Lott (Gearjammer 1950-1951)

Will there be a gearjammer reunion? Yes, it will take place! A possible date could be on a Saturday in June following the opening of Going-to-the-Sun-Road. Ideally, it would be in conjunction with the return of the rehabilitated red buses to tour duty. But a huge amount of work must happen first.

All 33 of the 1930s red buses are in Michigan. Ford has guaranteed the return of 20 for the start of the coming season. Some of us remain optimistic that all 33 will be restored for use next summer. Number 98, the initial prototype, made its debut at Lake McDonald Lodge on June 21, 2001 and was pronounced a beautiful success. Another prototype, number 105, has now been completed utilizing the smaller F350 engine and chassis. The remaining reds will conform to number 105's specifications.

As you may recall, the writer, and many others, wanted to provide excellent publicity to Ford Motor Company for their generous offer to pay the heavy cost to rehabilitate the fleet of red buses. We advanced the unique idea of having former gear jammers drive them back to Glacier Park. Funds necessary for this promotion were not available at Ford or at the National Park Foundation. We,

therefore, withdrew the offer.

A Gear Jammer Reunion Celebration, however, continues to receive considerable support and interest. (Suzanne Lewis, Superintendent of Glacier National Park, and John Hagen, President of the Glacier Park Foundation, are providing their wholehearted support for this endeavor.) To achieve such a reunion requires a huge amount of work, information, and a large number of volunteers.

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*For additional information about the gear jammer web page or database, contact John Holcomb at (608)821-0450, Fax: (608)821-0451 or (www.jholr@aol.com).*

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The original Glacier Park Transport Company records, including lists of drivers, apparently have been destroyed. To recreate the "gear jammer" lists is a daunting task.

The writer has been successful in obtaining several lists of names only, or names with old home town or college addresses. For three or four years we have current addresses or a partial list of current addresses. To hold a proper gear jammer reunion requires decades of current addresses, telephone numbers and/or e-mail addresses. Will you please volunteer to help?

You can start by furnishing gear jammers' names, home towns, high schools and/or colleges attended, year(s) and bus

number(s) they drove, etc. Next, would you be willing to do the research to locate drivers' current addresses for a given year?

We also are in dire need of a computer volunteer with excellent database and web page experience. Our gear jammer web page ([www.glacierparkjammer.com](http://www.glacierparkjammer.com)) needs to be revised in a manner that will let those of you who add your name, or someone else's name, go directly into our coordinated data base.

Until we have our web page perfected, please utilize Glacier Park, Inc.'s web page ([www.glacierparkinc.com](http://www.glacierparkinc.com)) and click on RED BUSES, then complete the Jammer Driver Registry form. GPI is cooperating with us gear jammers to compile a current database. For additional information about the gear jammer web page or database entries, contact John Holcomb (1955) at Tel: (608)821-0450 or Fax: (608)821-0451 or ([www.jholr@aol.com](mailto:www.jholr@aol.com)). You can reach me, Leroy Lott, at Tel: (214)320-8960 or Fax: (972)437-6215 and infrequently at (800)728-8332.