

# THE INSIDE TRAIL



Voice of the Glacier Park Foundation  Fall 2011  Volume XXVI, No. 2

## Tales of Glacier Park Lodge



*(Photo courtesy of Bret Bouda.)*

### ***Also In this issue:***

- *Riding the Rails from East Glacier* • *No Brakes!* • *Cheffie and the Goon Squad* • *Cabin #2 at Lake McD* • *Switchboarding* • *Mass Hysteria in the Many Glacier Lobby* • *Random Remembrances of GPL* • *Bulletin Board* • *Inside News of the Summer of 2011*

# Momentum Builds for GPL Centennial Reunion

The 100th anniversary of Glacier Park Lodge will take place in the summer of 2013. The event will be marked by a GPL Employee Centennial Reunion from July 16 to 19.

A tremendous organizing effort has been led by John Dobbertin (GPL '62-'63). John personally contacted scores of Glacier Park Foundation members who are former employees of the lodge. Through their contacts, the old employee lists, and Internet research, he and his colleagues have located more than 300 GPL alumni, with new contacts being added almost daily. The GPL reunion promises to be at least as large as last year's Gearjammer Reunion, which drew more than 300 people.

A GPL Reunion website and Facebook site are in operation. The website address is <http://glacier-parklodge.tumblr.com>. To contact

John Dobbertin, please e-mail [gplodge2013@gmail.com](mailto:gplodge2013@gmail.com) or call (609)483-2513.

John is ably assisted by co-organizer Joe Blair (GPL '66-'67, '72). Joe is one of several GPL alumni with stories featured in this issue. Special assistance has been provided them by Marion (Midby) Keating (GPL '57) and Sabra (Hester) Doggett (GPL '68, '69). The organizers also wish to thank the many alumni who have provided employee address lists, contacts and guidance, including Ray Djuff, John Hagen, Penny (Boelens) Haxthausen, Nancy Janousek, Mark Jefferson, Leroy Lott, Virgil Mitchell, Marita Olson, Kelly (Dusek) Schultz, and Lillie Vail. Glacier Park Incorporated's Pam Thomas has been very helpful in assisting with reunion arrangements.

The Glacier Park Foundation welcomes the GPL alumni who have joined us through these organizing efforts. We look forward to a memorable 2013 reunion and to similar reunions to mark the centennials of Lake McDonald Lodge (2014) and Many Glacier Hotel (2015).

## Thanks to Bret Bouda

This issue of The Inside Trail features several striking photographs by Bret Bouda. Bret is a lifetime member of the Glacier Park Foundation and one of the foremost and most versatile photographers of Glacier National Park. His books, *Glacier Park Wide*, *Glacier Classics*, and *Jammin'-to-the-Sun*, are available online and in Park bookstores. We thank Bret for generously sharing his masterful photography with our readers.

Thanks, too, to the many members who contributed their stories for this issue. We warmly encourage others to share their memories of Glacier Park!

### 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.*

# Inside News of the Summer of 2011

*Mac Willemssen (Swiftcurrent, Many Glacier 1967-70) and John Hagen (Many Glacier 1970-80)*

The winter of 2010 – 2011 left near record amounts of snow in Glacier National Park. As a result of this snow, many popular trails did not open until late in the season. The Highline and Ptarmigan Tunnel did not open until July 27. Other popular trails, such as Grinnell Glacier, Siyeh Pass and the continuation of the Highline from Granite Park Chalet to Fifty Mountain did not open until mid-August. Fortunately, spring and early summer weather was ideal for slow melting and fears of potential devastating floods were not realized.

The renovation of Many Glacier Hotel continues. The main portion of the hotel, from the lobby to the dining room,

Logan Pass. As a result of this construction project, many parking spaces were lost for the storage of equipment and supplies. Additional parking spaces were also lost so as to accommodate a significant number of porta-toilets. Park officials encouraged everyone to bring their own potable water and, if possible, use the free shuttle service to get to and from Logan Pass.

Glacier Park Inc., the concessionaire which runs the hotels and guest accommodations in Glacier National Park, purchased the St. Mary Lodge and other facilities in St. Mary. GPI had earlier purchased the Grouse Mountain Lodge in Whitefish, Montana.

A winter avalanche seriously damaged Sperry Chalet. Because of this damage, the Chalet was closed to guests in late

Glacier), Potter hiked over 20,000 miles on the trails of Glacier.

Ms. Vanderbilt started her Glacier career as a Park Service dispatcher in 1980. She spent several years in Yellowstone, where she married ranger Gary Moses. Moses and Vanderbilt transferred to Glacier in 1989, and Vanderbilt then served for 22 years as Glacier's public information officer. Everyone who follows the Park has read newspaper stories based on her press releases and her comments on public affairs. She has been a good friend to the Glacier Park Foundation.

The Gunsight Pass Trail turned into a hiker's nightmare this past summer. An avalanche brought snow, mud, trees and other debris down and over the trail just before it arrives at Gunsight Lake. The bridge over the creek at the outlet of Gunsight Lake was destroyed and will require significant rebuilding, since not only was the bridge washed away, but the supporting piers were also destroyed. Any hikers who were able to overcome these first two obstacles were then confronted by a dangerous and steep snow field near Gunsight Pass.

Work continues in the Park on the removal of exotic and invasive plant species. Among other areas, crews were working on the removal of these exotic plants at Two Dog Flats.

Mountain lions were active this past summer. Several hikers encountered a less than friendly mountain lion near Lake McDonald Lodge. In addition, mountain lions are now becoming more frequent visitors on the east side of the Park.

A 50-year old hiker from St. Paul, Minnesota, was attacked by a grizzly bear on the Piegan Pass Trail on August 5. The

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was not available for guest usage. The dining room itself is being renovated to resemble its original design. Guests utilized the Interlaken and Swiss Lounges as temporary dining rooms.

Construction continues on the repairs and renovation of Going-to-the-Sun Road. These renovations resulted in traffic delays on both sides of Logan Pass. The heavy snow delayed the opening of the entire Sun Road until July 13, one of the latest openings ever. As of September 18, the west portion of the road from Avalanche Creek to Logan Pass was closed so as to facilitate round-the-clock road work.

A major project this past summer was the renovation of the restrooms at

August so repairs could be made.

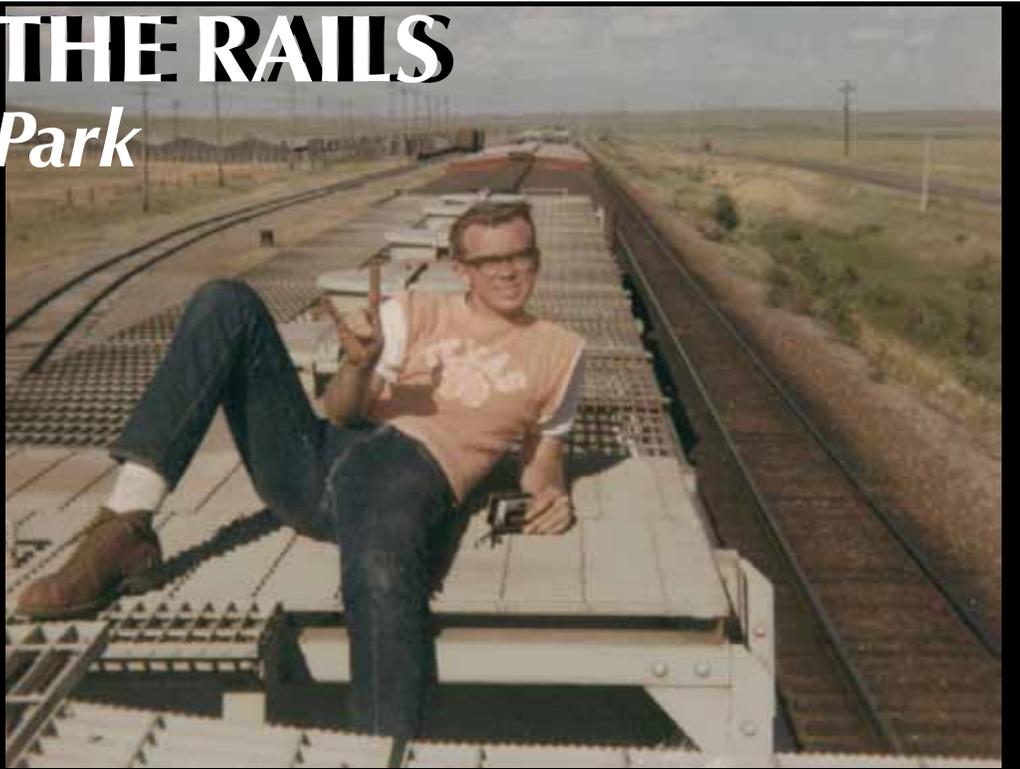
Visitation was significantly down at Glacier throughout the summer. The June visitation numbers were 21% less than 2010 (and the lowest since 2002); the July visitation numbers were down 24% from 2010 (and the lowest since 2003).

Two long-time Glacier National Park employees, Jack Potter and Amy Vanderbilt, retired. Mr. Potter began his career in Glacier as a busboy at Swiftcurrent Motor Inn in the summer of 1969. He continued thereafter as a trail crew member, a ranger (including being Chief Ranger) and retired as the Chief Science Officer. Over his National Park Service career (all of which was spent in

***(Continued on page 16)***

# RIDING THE RAILS in Glacier Park

*The author showing "Hook 'em Horns" on a gondola car between Cut Bank and Whitefish, 1966. (Photo courtesy of Joe Blair.)*



*By Joe Blair (Glacier Park Lodge 1966-67, 1972)*

Like so many Glacier stories, mine begins with Ian B. Tippet.

I was the grader for an accounting professor at the University of Texas in the spring of 1966. I went by his office one day to pick up some papers. While waiting, I noticed a letter from Mr. Tippet on the departmental bulletin board. He was looking for junior and senior accounting students to work in the accounting department of Glacier Park, Inc. for the summer. (I told Mr. Tippet recently that that letter changed my life!)

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*Like so many Glacier stories, mine begins with Ian B. Tippet.*

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I flew to Great Falls on May 31. I met Rick Smith at the bus terminal the next morning for our ride to East Glacier. Rick was my roommate that summer, and he became a friend for life. The day we rode to East Glacier was cold, damp, and overcast with very limited visibility.

The next day dawned bright and clear. I

remember thinking that it was like God had come in overnight and placed those beautiful mountains, which we had been unable to see the day before, there for our enjoyment. I have been hooked on Glacier ever since.

I went back the next summer, 1967, and then joined the Air Force and served four years. During that time, I met the love of my life. We were married on July 18, 1970, just ten days after I returned from Viet Nam. Carol and I spent the summer of 1972 working at Glacier Park Lodge. That was the summer between the Air Force and graduate school for me.

## **My Introduction to Riding the Rails**

Unlike the other locations, Glacier Park Lodge offered access to the railroad. We were about 200 yards from the depot in East Glacier. I have always been fascinated with trains, and I soon found out about hopping freights from employees returning from previous years.

That first summer, I logged over 1,000 miles on freight trains, including over 800 miles in either the engine or the caboose. There was a very special relationship back then between the train crews and the summer employees in the park.

The longest trip I made that first summer was from Glacier Park Lodge to Spokane, Washington, and back in time for work on Monday morning. John Booth was my traveling companion on that trip.

The eastbound freights used helper engines to push them up the steep grade. The helpers were based in Essex, near the Izaak Walton Inn. At Summit, twelve miles west of Glacier Park Lodge, the trains would stop to let the helpers disengage.

The trip back from Spokane ended unceremoniously for me when it looked like the freight wasn't going to stop at Summit. It was the middle of the night. John said he thought we'd better jump, so I did. After John saw me hit the ground and tumble, however, he had second thoughts, and waited until the train actually stopped before stepping off. I remember seeing John walk back

to the station and being very mad at him. If I look hard, I can still see the scar on my right hand from that landing.

There were many other trips with many other traveling companions including some with girls from Glacier Park Lodge. Other than the trip to Spokane, all the others were between Cut Bank and Whitefish where the freights would change crews. I remember getting in a boxcar at the station in Whitefish and having the dispatcher come out to show us how to fix the door so we wouldn't be accidentally locked in. One of my trips from Cut Bank to Whitefish was with Jay Brain and we rode on the small deck of a gondola-style freight car. It was a beautiful day and we took full advantage of the upper deck of the small platform at the end of the car.

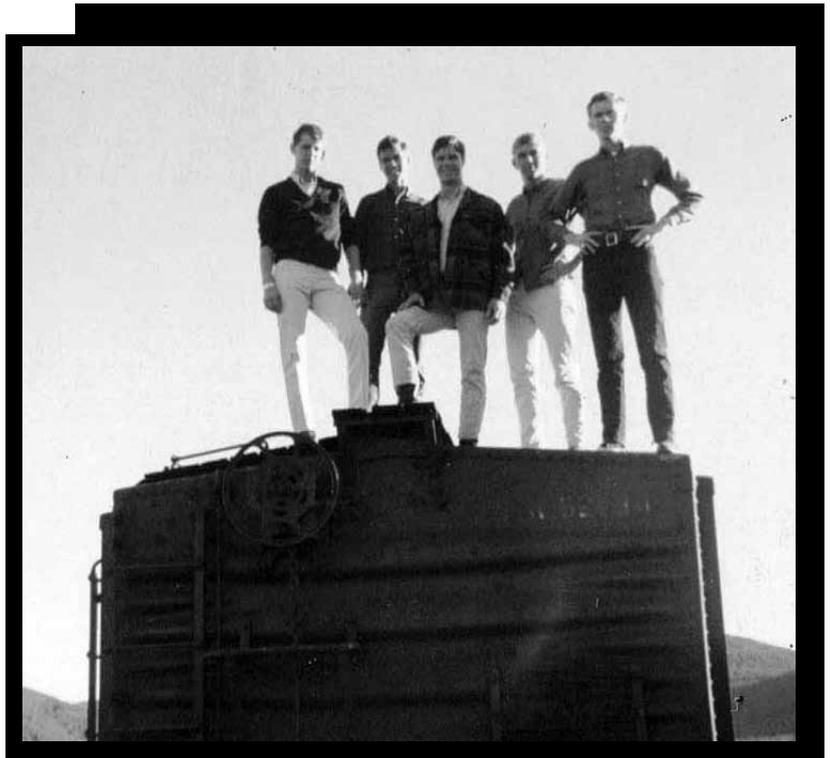
### **A Midnight Ride to Whitefish**

At the end of my first summer, Rick Smith and I hitchhiked to Many Glacier and hiked to Grinnell Glacier with Linda Rockers and Kay Droegemueller. When we returned to Glacier Park Lodge, the employees' cafeteria had already closed, so we walked the 200 yards to East Glacier and ate a hamburger at the little café.

While we were eating, Rick mentioned how he was missing Julie, his girlfriend of that summer, who had ended her employment and gone home to Whitefish. About that time, a mile-long west-bound freight stopped at the depot, which was between us and the lodge. This was very unusual, because only the passenger train, the "Empire Builder," made regular stops at East Glacier. We found out later that Bryan Simms, a bellman at the lodge, had boarded in Cut Bank and talked the train crew into stopping to let him off.

Very much on the spur of the moment, Rick and I decided to catch the freight to Whitefish so Rick could see Julie one more time. We paid for our supper and raced through the tunnel under the tracks and up to the station. By that time, the train was pulling out. Running beside the train, we yelled at the engineer to ask if we could ride to Whitefish. He yelled back to hop on the fourth unit behind the lead locomotive.

Rick went first. I knew I'd be in trouble if Rick didn't quickly move up the ladder, so I told him to keep moving once he swung on. Within a few minutes, we had gone from discussing hiking at the



*Glacier Park Lodge employees waiting for the freight at Marias Pass, 1966. (Photo courtesy of Joe Blair.)*



*Banquet in a boxcar: Joe Blair, Susan Elrod and John Booth, 1966. (Photo courtesy of Joe Blair.)*

## *(Continued from previous page)*

café in East Glacier to rumbling away on a westbound freight. It was time to take inventory to see if we had any money for food and lodging once we got to Whitefish.

This was the first and last freight-hopping adventure for Carol. She loves me, but you have to draw the line somewhere. It was cold and dreary and we had chosen a metal box car which was

Last year, Carol and I celebrated our fortieth anniversary with a trip to Glacier. Our second anniversary (July 18, 1972) had been a memorable one. On that day, it snowed at the lodge and we went out to eat at Bison Creek Dude Ranch. While we ate, we listened to Christmas carols and watched quarter-size flakes drift slowly to earth. Having grown up in Texas, I didn't think that was possible on July 18!

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By the time we left East Glacier, it was dark. We walked up to the first unit and had a great conversation with the engineer. From time to time, he would turn off the headlight, and the stars were magnificent. That's the only time in my life I ever saw the Northern Lights. Once, the engineer had to turn off the headlight so a moose would get off the tracks. He told us that the animals tend to freeze in the bright light of the oncoming train.

When we got to Whitefish, we fortunately did have money enough between us to get a room at a small local hotel. I checked in there while Rick walked out to Julie's house. The next day, we caught an eastbound freight back to the lodge. That was a trip I'll never forget.

### **Bailing Out Beside My Bride**

The final chapter in my saga of riding the rails occurred in 1972, my final year working at Glacier Park Lodge. My wife, Carol, was from South Carolina and had never been west of the Mississippi River before she met me. She had heard many stories of Glacier, including the romance of riding the rails. On one of our days off, we drove to Cut Bank, where we parked and found an empty boxcar.

much colder than the wooden ones. We made the five-hour trip to Whitefish and went downtown for a pizza, then caught an eastbound freight back to Cut Bank.

The trains usually stop in Cut Bank to change crews. This one, however, only slowed down to "change on the fly," and then began picking up speed again. The next stop would have been Havre, and our car was in Cut Bank. We decided to jump, and got banged up a little but survived.

### **Postscript**

In an ironic twist of fate, one of my volunteer activities in retirement is as a spokesman for Operation Lifesaver. It is a nationwide, non-profit public information program devoted to reducing collisions, injuries and fatalities at highway-rail crossings and on railroad property (<http://oli.org/>). I'm a little like a former drug addict talking to kids about not taking drugs.

One of the places where we always stay on our trips to Glacier is the Izaak Walton Inn in Essex. The Izaak Walton was built in 1939 by the Great Northern Railroad. We always enjoy the hospitality and railroad ambiance.

When we checked out in 2010, we were asked to fill out a guest satisfaction survey. One of the questions asked, "How did you discover the Izaak Walton Inn?" I enjoyed answering: "Hopping freights in 1966."

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# Cheffie and the Goon Squad

## *Adventures at East Glacier in '57*

By Bob Bystrom (*Glacier Park Lodge*  
1957)

### Home Away From Home

It wasn't very homey, but in 1957, the men's employee dorm at East Glacier Park Lodge was home away from home for many fellows in their teens to mid-twenties. I was one of them—17 at the time and inexperienced in just about everything. Life lessons came soon and fast, thanks to the motley crew of which I was part.

It was a short walk from East Glacier Hotel to the rambling one-story dorm shaded by lodgepole pines. Inside, tiny rooms lined each side of the dimly lit hall that bisected the building. The sparsely furnished rooms were designed more for sleeping than living, which was appropriate given the fact that most of us worked extended and often irregular hours.

Although all of us needed more sleep than we got, paradoxically the building designed to allow it more often prevented it. Indoor and outdoor noises penetrated the paper thin walls day and night—the roar and clang of garbage trucks, radios in nearby rooms, hoots and guffaws of dorm mates kibitzing during off hours, etc.

The hall and its wooden floor comprised a giant echo chamber that amplified the sound of exuberant, inebriated and heavy-footed residents coming and going. Tex, who might or might not have come from Texas, was a drawling, high-spirited goofball and notable



(Photo courtesy of Bret Bouda.)

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*Tex, who might or might not have come from Texas, was a drawling, high-spirited goofball and notable noisemaker given to singing ribald songs as he stomped up and down the hall.*

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noisemaker given to singing ribald songs as he stomped up and down the hall.

### Born to Blast

Possessed by a passion for fireworks, Charley was a noisemaker too. I came from fireworks starved Minnesota where sale of the stuff was strictly limited, so I was mildly curious about the allure of his hobby. When I visited an East Glacier fireworks shop with him I was amazed by Charley's intimate knowledge of the diversity of bombs, crackers and rockets that loaded the shelves.

I was too stingy to buy fireworks for myself so I sometimes watched Charley set off his. On a couple of occasions he magnanimously allowed me to shoot a few of his bottle rockets.

The noise of Charley's nightly shooting sessions often made sleep impossible, but because we were friends I was reluctant to confront him about it. I was secretly relieved when a directive

from hotel management discouraged the practice due to the danger of setting a fire in the tinder dry pines. However, if Charley heard about the directive, he must have ignored it because his shooting continued unabated. Fortunately, nothing serious came of it.

### Dining Room Duties

Dishwashing was the lowest of the low in the hotel's job hierarchy and I was hired for that position. Two young women shared my fate—Maggie, lanky, voluble and assertive and Pam, diminutive, soft-spoken and compliant. We worked hard, got along well and were an effective team.

Piles of dirty dishes accumulated near the well-used washer at all hours and in an endless stream when the dining room was busy. Scraps of what once must have been delectable food combined with spilled beverages and cigarette butts to form a rivulet of slop from which we retrieved dishes and glassware. The washer steamed and grumbled as

## *(Continued from previous page)*

we pushed loads of dirty dishes into its maw and retrieved them sparkling at its other end.

Sweating profusely, we kept at it until shouting at the servers' counter and the flap of dining room doors subsided. While catching our breaths we congratulated ourselves for keeping up with the demand for clean dishes and dried our water wrinkled hands. Were we actually finished? The only way to know was to ask a waitress or peek into the dining room and look for dawdlers. Sooner or later we called it quits, only to hear the clink of belated dirty stuff arriving to set the stage for the next shift.

Dishwashing was grueling, but no one

team, interact with guests and obtain a share of the servers' tips. I was one of four or five busboys, all of whom I considered conscientious workers who earned their pay. The waitresses were diligent and efficient workers too, except for one who spent the wee hours at Dusty's and often showed up late for breakfast duty with bleary eyes and breath that reeked like vapors from Hades.

For the most part we all got along well, but the busboys' share of servers' tips was a bone of contention. Kathy, an official or self appointed "head waitress," considered busboys more of a nuisance than help. She had a lexicon of choice

be treated with utmost deference and respect. I was never called upon to help serve him or others at his table, but I believe those who were fulfilled their duty.

Although we deferred to Billy Big Spring, we stereotyped Native American culture in some of our dining room traditions to amuse the guests. Faux Native American uniforms were required dress for waitresses and busboys. So attired, we marked guests' birthdays and anniversaries by marching single file to a tom-tom beat behind the head waitress toward the celebrant. Then, to a tune reminiscent of a Hamms Beer jingle, we trolled:

Happy, happy, happy, happy, happy,  
happy birthday  
Celebrate the Indian way,  
For though a birthday's very brief  
In Glacier Park, you are a chief  
On your birthday  
Happy birthday  
Big chief birthday!

At the climactic last line the head waitress plopped a candle-lit cake before the celebrant while another waitress crowned him/her with a feather head-dress. Then everyone cheered.

### **To Cruise or Not to Cruise**

Events took an unexpected turn when the hotel manager announced that a moonlight cruise on a nearby lake had been scheduled for East Glacier Hotel employees. Going on the outing appealed to me, but I dismissed the possibility because it was a girl-ask-guy affair and I didn't have a girlfriend. So I was pleasantly surprised when a waitress named Carol asked if I'd like to go with her. Although I didn't know Carol very well, I gladly accepted her invitation. Upon reflection I concluded that I might enjoy getting to know Carol as much as the boat ride.

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*Technically we were in Cheffie's domain, so  
when anything went wrong at the dishwasher,  
Maggie's loud complaints got results.*

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bothered us as long as we got the job done. In contrast, the grill, steam table and servers' counter comprised a combat zone where waitresses, cooks, and kitchen staff challenged one another in the high stakes process of getting food to guests in a timely manner. Fortunately, a good-hearted but short-tempered lady everyone called Cheffie imposed a semblance of order on the chaos. Technically we were in Cheffie's domain, so when anything went wrong at the dishwasher, Maggie's loud complaints got results.

Work proceeded this way for a while until an additional busboy was needed in the dining room. I asked for the job and got it—a minor promotion that was a step up in the food waste and dirty dish stream. Although I didn't get a raise, I welcomed the chance to become a part of Hostess Cassidy's dining room

words for any busboy who failed to refill a water glass or clear a salad plate before the entrees arrived. On one occasion, when urgent need called for it, she hoisted a heavy table overhead and hauled it across the dining room, berating useless busboys as she went. Predictably she was less than happy about sharing her hard earned tips with the likes of us. Her comments and other factors led us to question the transparency and fairness of the calculations that determined our share of tips.

### **Billy Big Spring**

The hotel entertained many notable guests. Especially memorable was Billy Big Spring a prominent Native American of the Blackfeet community. I was told that Big Spring and the Great Northern Railroad Company were partners in enterprises of considerable financial importance and that he must

## *(Continued from previous page)*

Oddly, a few days later she approached me to say she was sorry, but something had come up and she wouldn't be going on the cruise. She seemed embarrassed to tell me this, so I didn't press the point when she offered no further explanation. I was disappointed, but didn't dwell on it because I hadn't expected to go on the cruise in the first place.

However, within the day Maggie asked me to join her on the cruise. I had mixed feelings about the invitation. I still wanted to participate in the event, but although I liked Maggie, I was wary of her assertiveness and had no interest in being a closer friend than I was. In that context I found the romantic connotations of a "moonlight cruise" unsettling. Nevertheless, with unspoken reservations, I agreed to go with her.

The timing of Maggie's invitation struck me as too perfect. Considering that, and knowing her personality, I surmised that she might have had a hand in Carol's change of heart. In a confrontation I suspected that Carol would not have prevailed in a dispute about Maggie's likely territorial claim on me as a former member of the dishwashing team.

### **A Not so Perfect Union**

Bill, who was a student at Macalester College in St. Paul, arrived for work at East Glacier about the same time I did. He was partially disabled and had limited mobility, but wiry and energetic he had no trouble keeping up with the rest of us. He was employed as a clerk at the front desk where his sociability and intelligence must have served him well. We chatted in the dorm occasionally, but our paths didn't cross at work so I wasn't well acquainted with him.

In late June Bill handed me a flyer with information about a committee he had formed to improve working conditions for East Glacier employees. I was mildly curious about what concerns or grievances motivated him to organize

the effort, but I didn't attend any of the committee meetings. Everything I learned about events that followed was fragmentary and second hand, but according to the grapevine, Bill was organizing an employee union and tension was escalating between the hotel management and the seasonal employees who were promoting the union. A day or two later I noticed that Bill's room was empty. He had been fired.

The episode hadn't affected me directly, but it was disturbing because I felt sorry for Bill and couldn't understand why he had taken what, under the circumstances, appeared to be a path to self-destruction.

### **The Goon Squad**

Serious hikers considered Mount Henry a mere lump, but I appreciated its proximity to the hotel and its gentle invitation to the rugged terrain that lay beyond. A student of nature, I spent off hours there getting to know the park's flora and fauna.

One day as I returned to the dorm from a hike on Mount Henry, I encountered a strange crowd of young men milling about in the area between the dorm and the laundry. All were unaccountably thin, tanned, dirty, unshaven and generally unkempt like refugees from the Donner Party. Each attended a bundle of personal effects that looked fit only for fumigation or incineration. When I asked a fellow employee about the crowd he said, "Oh they're just a bunch

of ribes goons. They come here occasionally to take showers and do their laundry."

Later I learned that the goons worked for the U.S. Forest Service in what turned out to be a futile attempt to control western white pine blister rust by eradicating currants and gooseberries of the genus *Ribes* (pronounced "rye-beez") in national parks and forests. *Ribes* plants were secondary hosts to the fungus that was killing the pines.

I envied the goons' daily immersion in unspoiled nature. However, considering their appearance, I was glad to stick with dining room duty and tramps on Mount Henry.

### **Postscript**

My days as an East Glacier Hotel employee ended too soon—a whirlwind of work, learning and fun from June to September.

Capitalizing on my experience at Glacier, I found work the next two summers at Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado. Seasonal employment at the Harmony Guest Ranch was remarkably similar to that at East Glacier. The manager at Harmony staffed the dining room solely with men, but regretted it because carousing interfered with our duties. Declaring that we were a hopelessly unreliable lot, she threatened to fire us all and hire only Mormons. The drama deepened, but that's another story.

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# Cabin No. 2 at Lake McD

Cabin No. 2 at the Lake McDonald Hotel (now Lodge) was home to six spirited young female employees in 1947. As Johnny Ridgway recalls, "the gearjammers were always hanging around their porch." Mama Frase, the hotel manager, viewed this fraternizing suspiciously, so the six young women dressed as angels to demonstrate their innocence.

Joanie Fandle Lyons, one of the residents of Cabin No. 2, kindly furnished these photos and song lyrics which employees composed on the porch of the cabin. Joanie notes that, despite the angelic apparition, Mama Frase had the offending porch removed after the 1947 season.

## THE GEARJAMMER CANNONBALL (to the tune of "The Wabash Cannonball")

*List' to the roar of the engine,  
Hear the lonesome jammer's call.  
We're rollin' to McDonald  
On the G.P. Cannonball.*

*We never use our schedules,  
We drive just as we please.  
We can't name any mountains  
Nor recognize the trees.*

*We tour the reservation  
Spinning tales of Indian lore.  
If the "dudes" don't like our stories  
We fabricate some more.*

*We're Mrs. Frase's favorites –  
We're really lovely boys,  
And when we're down at Cabin 2  
We never make no noise.*

*We roll 'em in the evening  
We roll 'em in the morn.  
We'll be rollin' big red buses  
'Til Gabriel blows his horn.*

*When you're rollin' down the mountain  
And feelin' mighty bored,  
Put your gears into neutral  
And your trust in the Lord.*

*When this life is over,  
And we dwell in Heaven's hall,  
Saint Peter will be Agent  
For the G.P. Cannonball.*

*Mama Frase, the hotel manager, viewed this fraternizing suspiciously, so the six young women dressed as angels to demonstrate their innocence.*



*First place, the Big Masquerade Party at Lake McDonald.*



*Mama Frase.*



# MASS HYSTERIA

## *in the Many Glacier Lobby*

By Dick Schwab (*Many Glacier 1947-52*)

An episode that caused intense nightmares for the desk clerks and the tour leader was the legendary Calamity of the Southern Ladies' Flower Garden Tour. For awhile the entire Many Glacier lobby was like a henhouse filled with hysterical chickens beset by a fox. It seems these ladies had a sort of mass psychology that had a hair trigger, which if snapped drove them all into a frenzy.

What touched off the conflagration was the usual total incompetence of the people in the reservations department at the Entrance Hotel, who

The bellhops were directed to place the guests' bags in the rooms ahead of time according to this plan.

Soon after the ladies debouched from the buses, all feathered and gloved, the first hints of the magnitude of the disaster became evident. A vanguard of them starting going up to their assigned rooms where they found sitting inside the door their own bags and those of the WRONG PERSON! They were aghast and began to circle back to the desk -- already crowded with several layers of other ladies waiting to be assigned their keys -- to demand that the unthinkable blunders be rectified.

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arranged for rooms at Many Glacier for several busloads of gentlewomen of the Southern Garden Club. They failed to note one essential stipulation. These ladies had spent months maneuvering to pair up in rooms in such a way as to observe the prescriptions of their strict social hierarchy and various cliques, and they had laid down explicit and firm instructions and commitments about which one should room with whom.

Horror upon horrors! Our innocent room clerks, not being apprised of these instructions, simply took the roster of names and paired them off at random, or in alphabetical order.

Panic began to spread, as the ladies milled about the desk and word passed from person to person that something like Armageddon had arrived. It was much like the scenes I have seen of wildebeest herds migrating across an African river, when the mothers get separated from their young. Mothers and lost calves, bleating and grunting, swim back and forth across the river vainly searching for one another and creating complete chaos. The stunned desk clerks could find no practicable way to undo the calamity, since the hundreds of bags, hat boxes, vanity kits, steamer trunks, clothes valet

bags, smaller luggage, and gifts and souvenirs for relatives had already been distributed to the rooms.

When this dread truth finally registered upon the multitude of the Garden Club, mass hysteria ensued. Thunderstruck ladies, the feathers of their hats atremble, stumbled aimlessly through the halls and the Lobby. Some collapsed in chairs and wept. Others sulked and peered resentfully through the feathers that curved down before their eyes. The secret alcoholics found ways to take nips from their silver flasks.

Migraines flared up; snorts of indignation and outraged cluckings, moans, and gossipings rumbled from one end of the Lobby to the other. Friends of each level of social rank gathered in small exclusive groups to commiserate, express horror, and give the most desperate among them courage and philosophy. Somehow they would get through it. "But, Lily, you would not believe who Ah saw when Ah opened that dooah!" I heard one of the ladies say to another.

I declare that this description does not depart an iota from the truth. As night fell, gradually the agitation diminished, and only a few ladies stayed up late brooding in the Lobby before they reluctantly went to their rooms. The delicious dinner served them in high style in the dining room comforted most of them, especially those who tended to be full-bodied. The next day they departed and everything returned once again to tranquility in the Lobby.

# Random Remembrances

## *from Glacier Park Hotel in the 1940s*

*By Ginny Leach Mouw (Glacier Park Lodge 1940-42, 47-50)*

Once while hiking from Logan Pass to Granite Park, I came upon a pair of hikers just setting up for lunch. The young man was putting the wine, the cheese, and a round of crusty bread in place. What a romantic setting! Even so, they invited me to join them. There I sat with my mundane sack lunch, and all I could think of was: "A loaf of bread, a jug of wine and thou beside me singing in the wilderness..... Ah wilderness were paradise enow." (with apologies to Omar Khayyam) Glacier's wilderness was indeed a paradise to me both then and now.

Howard Hays, of the Glacier Park Transport Company, and his family spent their summers in one of three houses that fronted the golf course. One day when I was over there, Howard's son Bill told me that if I brought him enough huckleberries, he'd have a pie baked for me. What an offer, I thought. He couldn't lose. There was no way I could get to a good huckleberry patch -- no time and no transportation. As I walked to the dorm, I ran into a fellow from the office who said "I've got a huge sack of huckleberries and you can have them if you want them," to which I responded that not only did I want them but that I'd share the pie that had been promised. Within half an hour of the time Bill made the offer, I was back with the berries. Whoever had to bake that pie must have been ready to KILL BILL, but as for us, we just laughed and did away with that pie in a hurry.

Johnny Buhler, a bellhop the first summer I was there (1940), told me that he always got into the shower with all his clothes on, thereby washing himself and doing his laundry at the same time. Not a bad idea!

That same summer, another of the bellhops was Jack Gibbons, the son of a former mayor of St. Paul, Minnesota. He was a tall, handsome fellow that everyone liked. He and Marie Fandel, the "Indian girl" at the dining room, were an item. In midsummer Jack developed a severe blister on his foot which got infected, and before we knew it, he developed blood poisoning, which killed him. This was pre-penicillin, and there was simply no way to help him. For most of us it was the first death of a person our own age, and we were devastated.

Weather is often a part of one's memories -- a multitude of stars visible in the night sky, far from the city lights; the rosy alpenglow on the mountains as I made my way to the cafeteria in the early morning; northern lights, so vivid and colorful, brighter than I had ever seen them; huge hailstones hitting the dorm skylight; and once, only once, a harvest moon just rising and spreading almost from horizon to horizon.

I was unable to work at the park in 1949, but I did take time to go out for a hiking trip led by Frank and Edna Evans. We hiked, but the supplies were taken in by pack horses. This covered all of the area of the park that I had never been able to get to -- Bowman, Kintla, and all

the area northwest of Many Glacier where the old tent camps use to be. The day we set out for Crossley Lake to climb to Stoney Indian Pass I was the first person on the trail. I hadn't gone far when a grizzly turned up. It appeared to be a young, not fully grown bear. We both did a double take and then took off in different directions. This was the only time in all my hiking in the park that I encountered a bear. Frank was really angry, mainly because he knew a grizzly was in the area, and he desperately wanted to see it. I found my notes from this trip, and laughed when I read about the wonderful full moon nights. I was so exhausted that I never saw that moon. I finished it off with "Guess I AM getting old!" I was all of 29.

In the early 40's the Glacier Park Hotel Company hired bands to play six nights a week. Ours, headed by Ralph Williams, played in the grill, and they were terrific. They played all the Big Band music -- Glenn Miller, Tommy Dorsey, Harry James, Benny Goodman arrangements plus many others. Whether hotel guests came to dance or listen is unknown, but the employees certainly flooded the floor night after night. I danced more in those three summers than in all the years before and since. You might be tired from the day's work or from a day off hiking in the mountains, but you cleaned up and made your way to the grill, and suddenly you were re-energized. That girl has long since disappeared, and how I miss her.

# NO BRAKES!

## *Gearjamming Adventures in '57*



*(Photo courtesy of Bret Bouda.)*

*By Rick Richards (Gearjammer 1957)*

I arrived at Glacier Park Transport Company headquarters after driving from Albuquerque in June 1957. I was assigned a bunk, handed a driver's manual, and told to memorize it in the next few days. A written exam was given. We were told that the driving-and-touring part of the exam would begin at 0600 hours tomorrow.

Next morning, a busload of novice drivers was dispatched over Logan Pass. We took turns driving and giving impromptu tour talks. About halfway up to the Pass it was my turn to drive and speak tourish. Within 30 seconds after I took the wheel, it was snowing so hard that all of the surroundings were whited out.

I continued delivering my tour talk, although nothing could be seen. I told the others that they were extremely fortunate to be catching a rare sight of a Kee bird. This announcement was met with silence. Finally, a voice demanded to know what a Kee bird was. I replied, "Why, the albino swan eating a marshmallow just ahead by the curve sign on the right!" After that, I gave the standard tour from the manual, pointing out all sorts of

invisible mountains and glaciers.

At Logan Pass, I pulled off into a plowed area. I told the group that they had 15 minutes to enjoy the Visitor Center. I hoped that the Visitor Center was actually there. I never had seen the place before, and visibility was near zero.

The boss drove us on to Lake McDonald. We returned to East Glacier by way of Belton. Thus, the whole group of us was certified to give tours of Logan Pass without ever having laid eyes on the place.

The Pass wasn't through with me yet. A few days later, I picked up a busload of tourists at the Prince of Wales bound for Lake McDonald and Belton station – the milk run that all jammers would kill for. We made the drive to St. Mary and up to Logan Pass without incident. As we left the Pass and approached the first curve on the downward slope, however, I found that my foot brake wasn't functioning!

I downshifted quickly and began to haul on the hand brake. I announced to the passengers that they were being treated to a unique experience – that every so often drivers had to pretend that their brakes were out, and that

this was one of those times. I don't think they fell for it, but I kept them entertained, panting as I hauled on that heavy handbrake. Holy Clonorchis, but my arm was well worn by the time we arrived at McD! To top it all off, the agent would not allow me to take the group on to Belton, and the whelp that took the tour for those last ten miles refused to share the tips!

I loved old bus number 94. Boy, could she move downhill! I had a ball with deadheads for about three weeks before someone reported me for speeding and passing them. I was called in to the shop, where the mechanics accused me of cutting the governor device which limited the bus's speed.

I never had seen a governor before. The mechanics and the transport agent opened the hood of the bus and showed it to me. No question; there was a severed wire. I brought out my hand lens (as a biologist, I never was without one). We looked at the severed ends, and lo and behold, there was no cut there – just rust. Whew! I was off the hook. But I never passed another bus again.

# Switchboarding in '46

by Mike Buck (*Glacier Park Transport 1960-67, 2000-07*)

“Good morning. This is Many Glacier Hotel. My name is Pat Weed. Whom do you wish to speak to?” That salutation was modified in the afternoon and the evening. But whatever the time of day and however frenzied the moment might be, the greeting was given in a vibrant and welcoming spirit.

Pat Weed grew up in Park River, North Dakota, some fifty miles northwest of Grand Forks. She had a part-time job as Park River’s switchboard operator during her high school years. Pat’s father, Dr. Frank Weed, served Great Northern Railway employees and passengers as part of his medical practice in the town.

The railway connection brought Pat a summer job with the Great Northern’s Glacier Park Hotel Company. Pat took the train to Glacier at the age of eight-

teen, wondering: “What on earth have my folks gotten me into?” It was June, 1946. The hotels were reopening after being shut down for three summers during World War Two.

Because of her Park River switchboard experience, Pat was hired as a “plug-and-jack queen,” as telephone operators were known in Glacier Park. The employment routine was six days on duty and one day off. Work hours varied, since the switchboard had to be covered at all hours.

Hotel guests ranged from wealthy, well-to-do families, at the hotel for days at a time, to servicemen on short-term leave. Employees were not permitted in the hotel off duty. Social interactions were relegated to sites away from the hotel.

Employees also were not allowed to ride the “jammer” buses – nor were they to be caught hitchhiking. Yet they managed to tour the Park. Pat recalls



*Front desk employees in '46: Dick Ruhm, Lee Cashman, Bill Dicky, Pat Weed (photo by Pat Harvey.)*

slipping through the Chief Mountain International Border station without getting caught after it had closed officially for the night

Challenges confronted the novice employee in exploring the mountain environment. It never had crossed Pat’s mind to bring hiking gear to Glacier. Therefore she went hiking and mountain-climbing in “flatlander” tennis shoes!

Pat has been a friend of mine for decades. I salute her on this 65th anniversary of her summer in Glacier Park!

# Inspecting Scotchlight on Highway 2

By Jim Hanson (*Gearjammer 1949-50*)

Glacier Park was an unknown to me in 1949, an Occidental College junior from Los Angeles. I was discharged from the navy in 1947, returned to Oxy, where I had spent one semester as a V5 Naval Cadet in 1945. A high school friend, who knew Sid Couch, suggested I talk to him about a summer job, and the rest is two of the most wonderful summers I have ever spent, a gearjammer, in the most beautiful national park in the world.

I was asked by Sid to drive Mr. Hays’s (the owner of the Glacier Park Transportation Company’s) 1941 Lincoln convertible, from Los Angeles to the park in early June, along with two other new drivers. The Lincoln was

a joy to drive. Out on the desert, we sometimes hit speeds of 100 mph, unknown to Mr. Hays, of course.

The buses then had stick shifts, four-speed, so we had to double clutch. This was a snap for a California boy who grew up with on-the-floor stick shift cars and trucks. That year, 1949, started a love affair with Glacier that has continued until the present -- so much so, that my wife and I have a second home in Bozeman, Montana, where we spend the summers, to escape the heat of Rocklin, our California home.

I had no idea in 1949 that all the jammers and hotel staffers were college students. It was just natural that love bloomed between the jammers and the dining room coeds

and housekeepers, so if there was a Shangri-La, this was it. Our jammer kitchens in East Glacier Park and at Many Glacier were staffed by wonderful cooks, who taught school in Montana and spent their vacations in the park. At Lake McDonald, where we ate with the staff, the food was good, but nothing like the food from our jammer kitchens. When we drove to the Prince of Wales Hotel in Waterton Lakes, we ate in town restaurants.

Driving my bus (#103 that year), meeting the “dudes,” enjoying fellowship with all the drivers and hotel staff, hiking the trails, and playing the slots at Dusty’s in the East Glacier Park outskirts, were an experience I wanted to continue. So the next

## ***(Continued from previous page)***

year, 1950, I returned to my heaven on earth. That year, I drove the 1941 Buick limousine, meeting VIPs at the train station in their own private railroad cars.

One of my guests that year was Mr. McKnight, Chairman of the Board of 3M. He and his wife were delightful, and invited me to eat with them in their private train car -- another highlight for a young man who grew up in the Depression. One day, Mr. McKnight asked if I could meet him at 11:00 pm to drive to Cut Bank. He wanted to check out a new prod-

uct, Scotchligh -- the paint that now marks every highway in the world.

Mr. McKnight wanted to see first-hand how effective Scotchligh would be. For that reason we drove on the dark, straight, treeless, deserted highway where we could see for a long way. I drove the car and

Mr. McKnight checked out the paint on the roads and signs. We arrived back at his train car at 4:00 am. It was quite a night and another outstanding experience in Glacier. Mr. McKnight was 80-plus years old, and his wife said that this was his first vacation! No wonder he was the Chairman of 3M.

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## **BULLETIN BOARD** *(Short Anecdotes and Letters to the Editor)*

### **More Baggage Tales**

Thanks for the June issue of *The Inside Trail*. As usual, it was filled with a lot of good memories of summers past. The article on Sid Couch, by Dick Schwab, was priceless. I dealt with Sid for six summers, and I can attest to the accuracy of Dick's description.

Your *Baggage Tales* article gave me a number of chuckles, reminding me of the two summers (1940 and 1941) when I was transport agent at East Glacier, then called The Entrance. Harvey O'Phelan was head porter. Every morning there was some crazy incident involving tourists, baggage, and/or porters that kept our sense of humor in fine tune.

One morning as we were loading tourists, a rookie porter told Harvey he had brought all of the bags out of a lady's room except her rope. He had tried to detach the fire escape rope that was all coiled up next to the window in her room. We started laughing out of control, and all the tourists thought we were nuts. What fun days in Glacier Park!

Keep up the good work. At almost 96 years old, we don't have much left but memories, and *The Inside Trail* provides many. Thank you, and God bless!

*John Turner (Glacier Park Transport 1936-41)*

### **Mr. Hummel, Job Consultant**

My summer at Many Glacier made quite an impression on me. A *National Geographic* article had inspired me. Two days after high school graduation I drove to Montana from smoggy Southern California in a car I had bought with lawn mowing money.

A friend of a friend had told me that a "Mr. Hummel" at the hotel company might be able to help with finding a summer job. From the West Glacier campground I phoned the company's East Glacier office and asked to speak with Mr. Hummel. They asked if he was expecting my call. I said, "No, but I could wait." They asked the subject of my call. I thought, "What's with all the formal questions?" I said, "A friend told me to talk to Mr. Hummel for advice."

Mr. Hummel came on the line, and I asked if I could meet him and get his advice on finding a job. He was pleasant enough, and said to go to the East Glacier office and make an application. Next day I did fill out an application and waited for awhile. I was shocked when I was led (in my tee shirt, Levis and boots) into a huge office and figured out that Mr. Hummel was the boss of the whole company! We chatted for awhile, and the next day I had a job at Many Glacier washing pots and pans.

*Dave Balding (Many Glacier 1965)*

### **The Dumbest Question**

While whitewater rafting in Glacier Park this summer, I heard a fellow rafter ask the guide, "What's the dumbest question you've ever been asked?"

The guide thought for a moment and answered, "Once a lady came to me with a can of bear spray. She asked, 'Is this can sufficient for a family of four? And do you need to reapply it?'"

*Dr. Phil Hagen*

# Inside News of the Summer of 2011

*(continued from page 3)*

hiker, who was hiking alone, rounded a corner on the trail and encountered a mother grizzly and a sub-adult cub. He suffered injuries to his left thigh and forearm, was grabbed and shaken by the bear, and then released. He was able to hike out on his own and encountered a ranger-led party who radioed for help.

There were several close calls for visitors this summer. On July 20, a rock fell and hit a passenger on a motorcycle near the Triple Arches on Going-to-the-Sun Road. On August 17, a mother and child slipped and fell into Upper McDonald Creek and were rescued by good Samaritans. Earlier, in late May, a lone hiker was found and rescued near the completion of an adventurous hike in deep snow from Polebridge to Brown Pass and then back to Kintla Lake. In all three of these incidents, a helicopter was used to facilitate the rescues.

Unfortunately, there were deaths in Glacier National Park during the summer of 2011. In July, Nicholas Ryan,

an experienced hiker, slid to his death down a steep snow field on the Grinnell Glacier Trail.

Later in the summer, Jacob "Jake" Rigby (a seasonal employee in the Park) died from a fall. Rigby, a skilled and experienced hiker, was making a difficult solo peak-to-peak traverse in the remote south part of the Park. He was crossing a rugged unnamed peak known as "8888" (from its elevation) between Brave Dog Mountain and Mt. Despair.

Rigby fell about 800 feet down an extremely steep face of the mountain. The recovery of his body was very difficult because of the treacherous location. A helicopter, pilot and park wardens from Waterton Lakes National Park in

Canada were brought in to conduct the recovery because of their special skills in alpine rescue.

It appears the mystery of a hiker who disappeared in the summer of 2008 has been sadly resolved. Yi-Jien Hwa, a native of Malaysia, had intended to do the cross-country traverse between Logan Pass and Sperry Glacier. When Hwa did not arrive, rangers and volunteers spent more than 2,500 hours searching unsuccessfully in difficult terrain.

Bits of clothing and bone were found this summer near Floral Park. Some items closely matched those on Hwa's equipment list. These traces apparently had been transported down by water and avalanches from steep cliffs above.

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*Two long-time Glacier National Park employees, Jack Potter and Amy Vanderbilt, retired.*

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## JOIN THE GLACIER PARK FOUNDATION

All friends of Glacier Park are invited to join the Glacier Park Foundation. Membership includes a subscription to The Inside Trail and the right to vote for directors. Please download a membership form from our Web Site ([www.glacier-parkfoundation.org](http://www.glacier-parkfoundation.org)) or send your name, address, phone number, and park experience to Glacier Park Foundation, Box 15641, Minneapolis, MN 55415.

An annual membership in the Foundation costs \$10. A "Friend of the Park" membership costs \$25 annually, cumulating to a Lifetime membership in five installments. A Lifetime membership paid in one installment costs \$100.

The Glacier Park Foundation is a § 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.

(Panorama  
by Christine  
Baker)

