

THE INSIDE TRAIL



Voice of the Glacier Park Foundation □ Fall 2012 □ Volume XXVII, No. 2

Gearjamming *in the 30's*

*(Photo courtesy of Leland
and Spencer Baskin)*



The Jammers of 1939

97-year-old gearjammer John Turner, our oldest member, recalls the great Swiftcurrent Valley Fire of 1936, the "Kerry Kleaner," and other adventures of that era (photo courtesy of Leland and Spencer Baskin)

Also In this issue:

- *Tales of the Musicians of Glacier Park Lodge* • *The Red Bus Disaster of 1977* • *Roger Folstrom and the Music at Lake McD* • *Employee Olympics at Many Glacier and Rising Sun* • *News of the Summer of 2012*

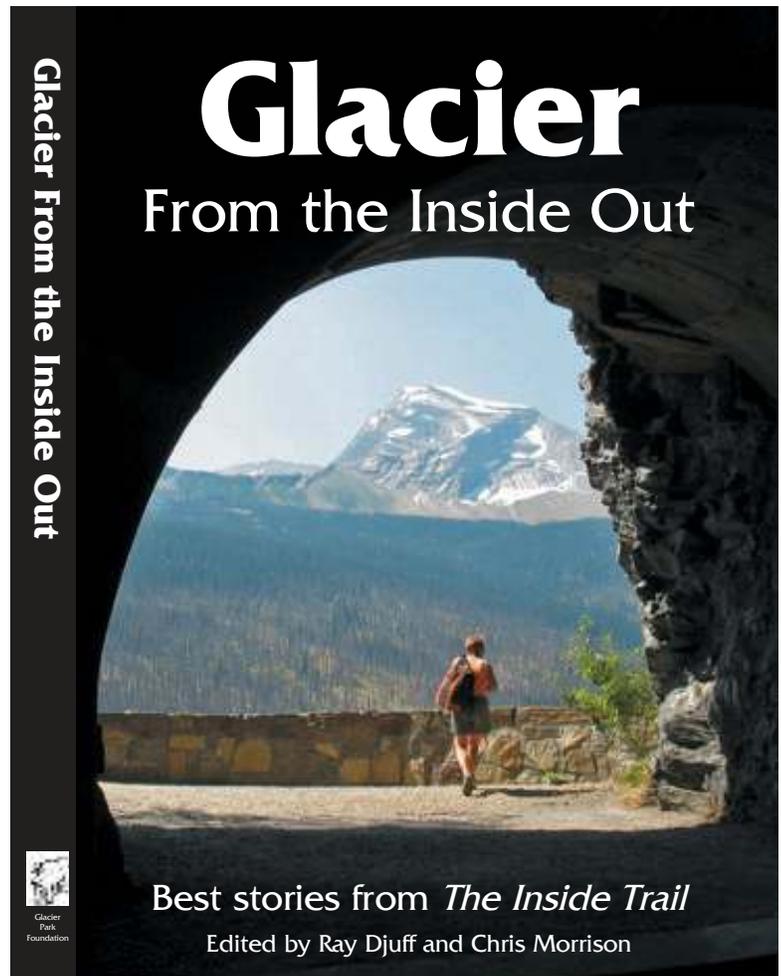
BEST OF THE INSIDE TRAIL *an Anthology Published*

The Glacier Park Foundation has published a book of stories from past issues of *The Inside Trail*. The book, entitled *Glacier From the Inside Out*, has just been released through the online publisher Lulu.com.

Stories for the book were selected and edited by Ray Djuff and Chris Morrison. Djuff and Morrison are professional authors who have published several books on Glacier and on Waterton Lakes National Park.

One hundred FOURTEEN *Inside Trail* stories are collected in the book. They are arranged in topical chapters – one for each of the principal lodges, one for the jammer buses, and others focused on general topics such as backcountry adventures and bears.

Copies of the book can be ordered through bookstores or online. To order online, go to Lulu.com/shop and put the name of the book in the “Search” field. Scroll down the list and when you see the book, add it to your basket. You then can “continue to checkout” to buy the book, with a credit or debit card or by PayPal. The price is \$21.95, plus postage of \$3.99 per copy.



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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 2012

Lost Employee Found Dead

A Lake McDonald employee vanished while taking a day hike in late July. Jakson Kreiser, 19, parked his vehicle at Logan Pass Visitor Center. He apparently intended to hike into Floral Park, an area high above Avalanche Lake, and perhaps to descend the cliffy headwall to the lake.

When Kreiser did not return, intensive ground and aerial searches were launched. They went on for days without success. The episode eerily resembled the disappearance of and searches for Yi-Jien Hwa in 2009, in exactly the same area. (Hwa's remains finally were discovered two

20 foot embankment of plowed-up snow and heavily struck the pavement of Going-to-the-Sun Road.

The Park Service suspended snow-clearing operations on the Highline Trail. The trail did not open until July 27, weeks later than the norm. The Highline also was damaged by rockslides and mudslides in a torrential rain on July 17.

The storm of July 17 dropped an inch and a half of rain in half an hour. Great slides of rock and mud crashed onto alpine areas of the road. Many vehicles were damaged by the slides, but no one was seriously injured.

Lounge, plywood on the floor of the Long Hall, construction materials stacked about, and a great deal of clatter and banging. But staffers experienced relatively few complaints, since guests were warned about these conditions before their arrival.

The Ptarmigan dining room has been refurbished from the floor to the rafters. Its changed appearance is arresting to those familiar with the room. The false ceiling which lay above the dining room for decades has been removed (as has the "bat attic" above the ceiling, legendarily full of flitting bats and enormous piles of guano).

In its restored state, the dining room is nearly twice as high as it used to be, with exposed wooden rafters vaulting upward some 35 feet above the floor. Black iron supports run among the rafters, suggesting the frame of a railroad trestle. The fireplace is striking, with its stonework chimney visible to the roof beams, twice as high as it was before.

The restoration was meant to restore the look of the dining room when Many Glacier opened to the public 97 years ago. Large Japanese lanterns hung flamboyantly above the room at that time. Those lanterns are replicated now in green, pink, white and yellow vinyl. The curious "pergola" (a framework of open wooden beams and columns) which covered the lakeside tables in Many's early years has also been restored.

The episode eerily resembled the disappearance of and searches for Yi-Jien Hwa in 2009, in exactly the same area.

years later, far below on the slopes overlooking Avalanche Lake. (See The Inside Trail, Spring 2012.)

The search for Kreiser ended on September 13. Hikers found his body in an area southwest of Hidden Lake. Kreiser had fallen in a cliffy area onto a position on a talus slope screened from the view of aerial searchers.

Trail Crew Leader Injured

Morgan Bell, a trail crew leader, was seriously injured in early July. Bell lost her footing while clearing snow on the Highline Trail, a few hundred yards from Logan Pass. She slid about 200 feet down a steep snow-covered slope, and then fell off a sheer 15-to-

Renovation Accomplished at Many Glacier

Very extensive renovation was accomplished at Many Glacier Hotel during 2011 and early 2012. The guest rooms in the Many's "Main" wing all have been redone, with new wiring, new furniture, new paint, and more insulation. (Employees report, however, that drafts still are felt in the lakeside rooms when cold winds roar off the mountains in early June.)

This work greatly complicated Many's operation in 2011, with half the guest rooms out of commission, meals served in the Interlachen

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Glacier Park Lodge Reunion Update

As of mid-September, 123 of Glacier Park Lodge's rooms had been booked by GPL "alums" for next summer's Glacier Park Lodge Employee Centennial Reunion.

"If you are planning on attending the GPL Reunion we urge you to make your reservations today," said reunion co-coordinator John Dobbertin, Jr. (GPL '62-'63). "We have found 616 of our 'alums' and GPL has 161 rooms."

Check-in for the reunion is Tuesday, July 16, 2013. Check-out is Friday, July 19. Glacier Park Lodge is offering GPL "alums" sleeping rooms at the Lodge for the 2013 reunion at 2011 prices.

To reserve your Glacier Park Lodge room, please contact Glacier Park, Inc. through the following representatives (be sure to mention the Group Code number, which is 1186QT):

Amber Green: Saturday through Wednesday
406-892-6729

Justin: Thursday & Friday
406-892-6722

E-mail: agreen@glacier-parkinc.com

Room rates and terms and other information on the event can be found at the reunion website:

<http://glacierparklodge.tumblr.com/>

The reunion will provide lots of time for GPL "alums" to reminisce. The tentative schedule includes Lodge tours, evening programs in the lobby

"If you are planning on attending the GPL Reunion we urge you to make your reservations today. We have found 616 of our 'alums' and GPL has 161 rooms."

with music by alumni performers, red bus tours, an optional hike from Two Medicine to Glacier Park Lodge along the Inside Trail, and picnics on the GPL lawn.

The third GPL Employee Centennial Reunion planning meeting is scheduled for January 25, 2013 at Disney's Wilderness Lodge in Orlando, Florida. All program details and registration forms will be available in March 2013.

Glacier Organizations Merge

Two major nonprofit organizations

that serve Glacier Park will merge on January 1, 2013. One of these is the Glacier National Park Fund, which raises private funds to support the Park. The other is the Glacier Association (formerly the Glacier Natural History Association), which operates Glacier's bookstores.

The name of the merged organization will be the Glacier National Park Conservancy. The merger is meant to make private fundraising more efficient at a time when federal budgetary support for the Parks may decrease.

The renovation of the Many Glacier dining room. (Bob Werner photo)



GEARJAMMING *in the 1930s*



An early morning start in 1937.

Photo courtesy of Leland and Spencer Baskin

By John Turner (*Gearjammer 1936-41*)

Editor's Note: John Turner marked his 97th birthday on October 6, 2012. To celebrate, he went out to lunch with fellow (considerably younger) jammer alumni, Don Perry (1954-58) and Ed Baretta (1958). John carries on prolific e-mail exchanges with many Glacier alumni. In this article, he supplements an earlier account of the great forest fire of 1936 which he wrote for the Fall 2001 issue of The Inside Trail.

Recently Leland and Spencer Baskin came to see me. They are the sons of the late Dr. Roy H. Baskin, a gearjammer during the summers of 1937-1939. They brought an old photo album that Roy had made up during his Glacier days.

Some of the snapshots are of a group of five Texas gearjammers (Bob Wise, Roy Baskin, Roddy Sims, Ennard Doggett and me) en route to and from Glacier. Our old '33 Chevy served us pretty well except for a flat tire or two. There were no freeways or interstate highways. Only two-

lane, bumpy state roads that went through every city and town.

Our route started in Joshua, Texas and ran to Fort Worth, Amarillo, and Raton, New Mexico (Raton Pass is where we showed the new drivers how to double clutch and practice downshifting). Then we continued to Pueblo, Colorado; Denver; Cheyenne, Wyoming; Yellowstone Park; Gardiner and Choteau, Montana.

We always spent the night at the Choteau Hotel to clean up before driving in to Glacier Park. Believe me, after driving, sleeping, and eating in the car 24 hours a day for three days we REALLY needed this! Then we went on to Glacier Park the next morning, and the start of another great summer.

Many Glacier's gearjammer dormitory [now the Ray Kinley Dorm], which is pictured in some of the photos, holds fond memories for me.....cribbage games, songfests with Mark Forgette and his ukulele, short sheets for guys out on a late date, and serenading the girls' dorm.

I also vividly remember the 1936 Swiftcurrent Valley Fire. But for the valiant efforts of Sid Couch and several of us gearjammers, the dormitory would have burned down on that evening of horror.

I've told the story of the fire in a previous article for *The Inside Trail* [in the Fall 2001 issue]. I was enjoying a leisurely day off at the Entrance when Sid, Many Glacier's Transport Agent, called Page Stanley, the East Glacier Agent. Sid told him to rush a couple of buses to Many Glacier for evacuating hotel guests. I was the first one dispatched, and arrived at Many Glacier at midafternoon.

By this time the fire had jumped the Garden Wall and headed down the valley, pushed by gale force winds. All the hotel guests, that wanted to leave had already been bussed out. Some chose to stay and help save the hotel. Shortly after we arrived, the road out became impassable due to cascading rocks and boulders released from Mt. Altyn.

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We had a "courtside" view of the inferno that was racing toward us, but not much time to observe it. The whole area was windswept with flying embers and blazing debris.

Sid Couch organized the gearjammer firefighters to save the employees' and gearjammers' dormitories and the bus garage. I presume that Omar Ellis, the hotel manager, did the same for the hotel.

We had a "courtside" view of the inferno that was racing toward us, but not much time to observe it. The whole area was windswept with flying embers and blazing debris. We were all draped in wet towels, supplied by Alice Porter, Chef at the gearjammers' dorm. Alice and her husband Ralph brought water to us to keep our headtowels damp.

We didn't have a lot of firefighting equipment -- only a couple of fire extinguishers, one from the transport garage and one from the dorm lobby, which were used very sparingly. There was a hose just outside the front of the garage that was used to wash the buses. It helped somewhat to keep part of the garage roof wet, but the VERY high and hot winds would dry it almost immediately. We didn't have any way to get water to the roof of the dorm, so we were fortunate that no languishing embers ignited it.

I recall that most of our effort was trying to snuff out all of the spot fires that kept cropping up in the dry bushes around the garage and dorm. We used anything available to do so. I don't recall anyone assigned to protect the cars or buses, which all

had been moved from the garage to the parking lot by the time I arrived. Most of the focus was on the buildings, especially the dormitory.

This fire happened 76 years ago, and over the years I have relived the experience -- the massive wall of flames charging toward us, gale force winds snapping and popping pine trees like match sticks, two mountains aglow with fire, and flaming debris flying all around us. At the time I didn't realize we were just a few inexperienced young guys trapped in a no-win situation, tantamount to fighting a dragon with a tooth pick.

I don't want to minimize the heroic efforts of all the employees who fought hard and long that evening, going to the brink of exhaustion. But given the severity of the situation, I have come to believe there was a Divine Hand present, or the hotel and dormitories would have been destroyed. Perhaps we all witnessed a miracle without knowing it.

Moving on to other photographs, I see one of gearjammers at the Belton train depot, waiting for the west bound Empire Builder. Ah yes, those anxious waits and the counting of tips after everyone was aboard! Then the deadhead back to East Glacier ("Entrance") with a well calculated stop at the Rocky Mountain Inn for a "cold one" before going on.

(Photos courtesy of Leland and Spenser Baskin)



*McFarland, Huxter and Miskay
watch the horses at Many Glacier -
7-2-37*



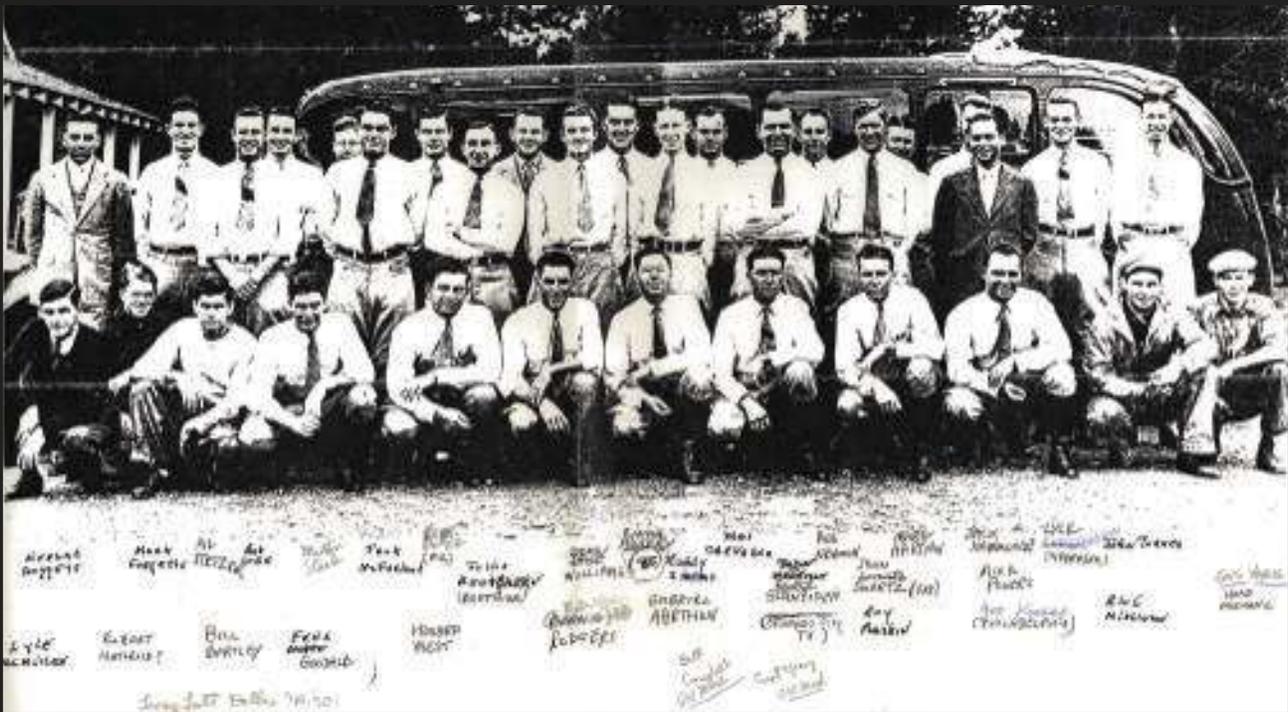
*Madeline and "Deedy" (Muriel)
Two Medicine, Montana*



*Hotel Hotel at the end of camp
in East Lake - 7-20-37*



*Waiting for the E.P.R. at
Belton - 7/5/37*



Gearjammers of 1937; John Turner at upper right. (Photo courtesy of Leland and Spencer Baskin)

The Rocky Mountain Inn was not really an inn. At least I was never aware of any lodging accommodations. It was a roadside bar on the south side of the road about six or eight miles west of East Glacier. It was a definite no-no place for gearjammers to stop, under company policy during my time. But some of us used to stop there anyway on deadheads from Belton for a candy bar or a cold beer.

There was a piano player at the Inn who was a former member of the Paul Whiteman orchestra. He could play any tune you could name if you dropped a couple of coins in the piano jar. He was always smashed, and once told me he downed at least one bottle of bourbon a day. I never saw him sober. I was never there at night, but I understand that it was a rough place. When I revisited Glacier Park in 2004, I wasn't able to spot it on our trip from The Entrance

back to Belton, so it must be history by now.

Another photo shows the Kerry Kleaner. This was a machine installed, I believe, at the beginning of the 1937 season for chemical steam-cleaning of road tar and oil from underneath the new buses.

The Kleaner had a rack to drive the bus onto and elevate it into the air. A trigger-operated nozzle released a high pressure mixture of steam and harsh chemicals that stripped the tar, oil, and anything else from the chassis. Who can forget those nasty ses-

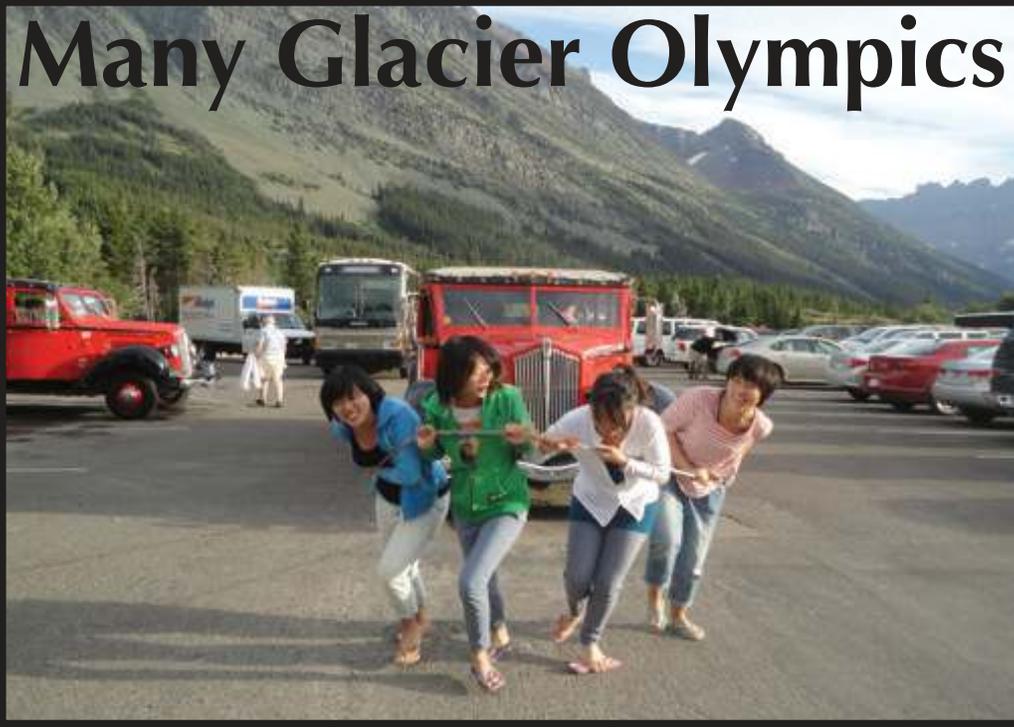
sions? All the "crud" was supposed to fall into the sludge pit under the rack, but most seemed to end up on the operator. If you weren't wearing a "g-suit," forget about going on a date that night! It was, indeed a messy chore.

September always arrived too soon. Then we had a final session with the Kerry Kleaner, turned in our buses, and boarded the '33 Chevy once again for the long drive back to Texas. Reviewing Roy Baskin's album brought back a lot of memories of some great summers!

*September always arrived too soon....
Reviewing Roy Baskin's album brought back a
lot of memories of some great summers!*

The Many Glacier Olympics

The Jammer pull. (Photos courtesy of Margarita Bunske)



By Margarita Bunske (Many Glacier 2008-12)

I first was introduced to the Olympics at Many Glacier Hotel when a grape hit my head whilst walking in the lobby. People were participating in an event called the Grape Toss. As I understand it, a person from the third floor had to drop a grape into the mouth of a person on the first floor. Little did I know that the following year, 2009, I would be the one organizing and leading the Employee Olympics.

When I was asked to lead the Olympics the first thing that came to my mind was that they should be more than just four events and one day. They needed to be something that would enable employees to express their competitive side. Helen Roberts, our manager, allowed me to extend the Employee Olympics to four days and 20 events. I was excited to be part of something really cool and eager to see if people would come.

I placed a wooden suggestion box in the Employee Dining Room, where employees could place their suggestions for Olympic events. Their suggestions added to the Olympic repertoire such games as chess, pool, ping pong, soccer, Kan Jam, horseshoes, poker, and a canoe race, amongst other longstanding events such as the Red Bus Pull.

Every year I aim to make the Olympics more interesting and more unique, to give them a Many Glacier style and morph them into something that every employee can enjoy. Our most popular events are soccer near the boat dock (always a heated battle), pool (always lasting until the wee hours), horseshoes and the Red Bus Pull (five employees dragging a bus, in neutral, across four spaces in the parking lot).

Eric Kendall has been an immense help in thinking of new events, figuring out where to hold each event, how to do it and what tools we need to obtain the desired result. He monitors events and is also the one to steer the red bus.

The Olympic medals have changed from year to year. They are much improved from the first Olympic medal, which was a balloon weight. This year we rented a pottery studio in Whitefish, Montana and three of us spent a day quoting Monty Python (maybe even acting it out) as we made 145 clay medals with a custom-made stamp and an engraving of the year: 2012. I hope that we can continue to make such medals every year, because those without medals were willing to barter just about anything for them!

I first was introduced to the Olympics at Many Glacier Hotel when a grape hit my head whilst walking in the lobby.

The Rising Sun Olympics



Everything was a competition.
(Photos courtesy of Dan Maturen)



An employee Olympics has been a longstanding tradition at Many Glacier Hotel. This summer (inspired by the London Olympiad), Rising Sun Motor Inn held games as well. The event was organized by location manager Dan Maturen, who previously had worked for many summers at Swiftcurrent and with the Park Service.

The Rising Sun games went on for a week, with one event held on each evening. Four teams were organized by department: Housekeeping, Dining Room, Kitchen, and Camp Store/Front Desk/Maintenance. The first event was a pie-eating contest. The only rule was that contestants were forbidden to use their hands. The contestants spontaneously enlivened the competition by flipping

opponents' pies upside-down with their teeth.

The second event was a water balloon toss. Team members tossed balloons back and forth while moving farther and farther apart. The object was to throw an unbroken balloon a longer distance than the others. This event was complicated by 70-mile-per-hour winds that blew down trees in the adjoining campground.

A stripping contest required each team to dress one member in as many layers of heavy clothing as possible. Contestants were weighed, and then each was given five minutes to undress (down to a minimum of a bathing suit) without assistance from others. Contestants then were reweighed to see who had removed the most pounds of clothes. The winning contestant shed 55 pounds.

The Front Desk team was disqualified for putting rocks in the pockets of a coat.

The final event was an obstacle course, in which four teammates had to (1) drink three bottles of huckleberry soda; (2) hop a distance in a laundry bag; (3) run a trail to the boat dock, pick up a croquet ball, and return; (4) knock the croquet ball against another and send it into a bucket; and (5) sprint to the shore of St. Mary Lake and dive in.

These obstacles proved unexpectedly challenging for some of the contestants. A source reports that "the Europeans weren't used to drinking pop, and could hardly make it through one bottle, let alone three. An older employee agreed to take a running leg, but he thought it was going to be a hundred yards, and it turned out to be almost a mile. So we waited and waited and waited and waited and *waited* and waited, and finally he arrived."

A source reports that "the Europeans weren't used to drinking pop, and could hardly make it through one bottle, let alone three."

RED BUS DISASTER OF 1977

The remains of red bus No. 100, preserved at Jammer Joe's Cafe at Lake McDonald. (Fred Miller photo)

Fred Miller (Gearjammer 1977)

June 27 was the anniversary of the fatal red bus crash that marked the end of the road for bus # 100.

The red jammer buses have been in operation since 1937, but only one has been totaled while in service. Of the 35 red buses manufactured by White Motor Co. for transporting tourists over Going-to-the-Sun road in Glacier National Park, 33 have been converted to propane and one is in storage. The other was wrecked in June of 1977. This is that story. It was just past midnight, Sunday, June 26. A National Park Service ranger was on the Many Glacier road, just inside the boundary of Glacier National Park. He saw a red jammer bus speed past him, with three or four people in it. "One was yelling out the window," his report said.

That was enough to arouse his suspicion, so the ranger pulled out from his parking spot and followed. As the red jammer bus quickly slowed to 30 mph, the park ranger searched for a reason to turn on his lights and make a traffic stop.

According to the Park Service incident report, "there was nothing else suspicious." The ranger had no evidence to pull the bus over for a violation. He followed it to the park boundary and watched it drive onto the Blackfeet reservation.

It was near 1 a.m. when the bus parked at St. Mary's resort. On the return trip to Many Glacier, according to a newspaper report, the bus's right front wheel went into a ditch near the bridge across the St. Mary River south of Babb. In overcorrecting, the vehicle slid sideways across the road and turned over, throwing three of the young men out through the canvas roof. The bus was totaled, the newspaper said.



He always had a smile on his face and he had an infectious laugh – that was his strength

According to the NPS incident record, the first call came in to the St. Mary Ranger Station about 3:45 a.m. The caller stated that a multi-injury automobile accident had occurred on US 89, 7 ½ miles north of St. Mary near the Duck Lake turnoff, and that ambulance assistance was needed immediately.

Three park rangers arrived on the scene about 4:10 a.m., and found four Glacier Park, Inc. employees – one of them trapped inside the rear compartment of the bus. "All victims smelled strongly of alcohol," the incident record stated.

About 4:15 a.m., the incident record states that a request was made for manpower and equipment to extricate one jammer from the back of the bus. He had fallen asleep in the rear compartment formerly used for storing luggage (prior to the propane modernization).

Two of the most seriously injured jammers were transported to the Cardston,

Alberta hospital, leaving about 4:35 a.m. A few minutes later, after prying the door open and removing the unconscious jammer, two rangers began to transport the last two victims to the Cardston hospital. About five miles from the hospital, the incident report states that one of the jammers "stopped breathing and had gone into cardiac arrest."

Bill Kelly, 27, of Rochester, NY, was pronounced dead-on-arrival at the Cardston hospital at 5:45 a.m. It was his first season as a jammer, according to his close friend, former Montana Auditor and Democratic gubernatorial candidate Mark O'Keefe.

"Bill was a great guy," O'Keefe said. He credits Kelly's optimism with helping him live through a jungle survival school in Panama when they were serving together in the US Army's 82nd Airborne military police. They had spent nine days in a swamp.

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“He always had a smile on his face and he had an infectious laugh – that was his strength,” O’Keefe said of Kelly. “He liked being outside and he was always full of energy.” The *Hungry Horse News* reported that Kelly “was well liked and highly regarded.”

O’Keefe and Kelly worked together in the Grand Canyon, and they camped out “45 or 50 nights” in the canyon, O’Keefe said. Kelly also had a strong

The remains of Bus # 100 are presently in Jammer Joe’s café at Lake McDonald Lodge.

affection for his nieces and nephews in Rochester, where “he always took them trick or treating,” said O’Keefe.

The newspaper identified the other jammers injured in the crash as Rodney Kleinbach and Robert Spencer

of Oswego, New York, and Frederick Miller III of Meadville, Pennsylvania. It said their Glacier Park employment was terminated.

The remains of Bus # 100 are presently in Jammer Joe’s café at Lake McDonald Lodge.

A Lament for Bill Kelly

By Fred Miller (Gearjammer 1977)

Bill, I hardly knew ya.

Sure, you were a friend of a fellow jammer, a guy with a smile on his face and a heart for fun, someone who enjoyed having a good time and who wasn’t afraid to take risks.

Most of us jammers the summer of ‘77 were like that. Most probably still are. The newspaper says you were “well liked and highly regarded.”

But when the four of us got tossed out of Jammer Bus #100 as it rolled that June night, it was as if someone had thrown four dice out of his hand and when they landed face up on the table, one of them showed death.

And Lord knows, Bill, that except for the grace of God, it could just as easily been me, Bob or Rod. Just doesn’t seem right, that what started with good intentions ended with your death.

Sure, we had some beer at Many Glacier that Saturday night. Seems like alcohol was an integral part of the Glacier experience. The Cardston hospital said we were “smelling quite heavily of alcohol at the time of admission.” Go figure.

We were all excited about finally being in the park, excited about the many tours we would be leading, excited about hiking the glaciers and mountain passes with friends, excited about get-

ting a Red assigned to our care, filled with exhilaration with the thought of living on the Crown of the Continent -- and getting paid to be there!

But had it not been for a damsel in distress, we never would have taken Red # 100 out from Many Glacier that night. Seemed the honorable thing to do. She needed a ride back to St. Mary to work her shift the next morning.

We were professional drivers with a fleet of buses at our fingertips. We figured surely “the Hum” (Don Hummel, owner of GPI) could spare a little gas, and no one would ever know that we had borrowed one of the buses for the short drive to St. Mary.

Must have been near 11 p.m. when we got to St. Mary, delivered the passenger, and headed to the bar for refreshments. Nothing too spectacular seemed to be happening, however – just one more Saturday night, partying in the moon shadow of Triple Divide Peak.

But it was on the way back to Many Glacier that fate struck its swift fatal blow. We were coming up to the Babb bridge, when one report said the right front wheel went off the road. The bus then veered to the left and rolled, throwing us through the open roof.

Of course we lay there for several hours before anyone found us. They figure we left St. Mary’s around 2 a.m., but it

wasn’t until about 4 a.m. that someone spotted the wreckage sprawled by the roadside. You probably would have made it if someone had found us sooner.

I landed on my head -- it took 35 stitches to sew my scalp back together -- and 21 years of life disappeared. (I had studied four years for a college degree, but seven days after getting the diploma, it vanished.) They let me out after nine days in a Cardston hospital, but it took a month of weeks to figure out who I was -- rebuilding life from the fragments of a scrambled brain. I still see double and short term memory is something I read about in books.

As for Rod, his legs got busted up pretty bad and he spent quite a spell in a Calgary hospital. At least his mind was intact. He forever walks with a limp, and his once-strong body became only a whisper of its former strength. Bob seems to have walked away largely intact.

But you didn’t make it home that night, Bill. One of those overhead chrome bars (the ones used to support the convertible canvas roof) must have caught you in the abdomen as we were shot out. Turns out your spleen was ruptured and you died of internal bleeding.

Newspaper says you and I were in an ambulance on the way to Cardston

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Tales of the MUSICIANS OF GLACIER PARK LODGE

Compiled by John Dobbertin, Jr.
(Glacier Park Lodge 1962-'63) Co-
Coordinator of the GPL Employee
Centennial Reunion

Glacier Park Lodge musicians are among the more interesting discoveries we have made in our search for former GPL employees. We have found 14 who performed between 1958 and the present. Most played in trios and quartets in the bar, which formerly was known as the Medicine Lounge (and now is called the Empire Bar).

Almost all of those we have contacted still perform, and some are professional musicians. For all of them, music continues to be an important part of their lives. It is our hope they will all return and – once again – perform at the Lodge for the July 16-19, 2013 Reunion. Here are their stories:

The Medicine Men

By James D. "Jim" Mason, Guitarist
(Glacier Park Lodge 1958-'60)

Early in spring of 1958 three fraternity brothers at Beloit College interviewed a talent scout from Glacier Park. Before long they were on their way to Glacier Park Lodge with accordion, bass and guitar. They were called "The Medicine Men" because they played in the quaint Medicine Lounge. They worked as houseboys by day and played evenings in the lounge until closing time.

They returned a second summer, relieved of their houseboy duties, and played music during the early cocktail hour and the evenings. They added tuba and banjo to their instruments. Guests threw tips into the



"The Medicine Men Trio of 1958. (Photos courtesy of Jim Mason)

tuba as they moved around the tables playing "The Tiger Rag" and polkas.

Their music appealed to guests their parents' age and to those who wanted something more upbeat than

The Chi-Guys

By John V. Benham III, Drummer
(Glacier Park Lodge 1966)

It all started in about March of 1966. I was over at my friend Rich's

The original group still gets together and has played for five of their daughters' weddings.

a violin and cello. Consequently, the group was given the keys to a red Volkswagen bus and they motored through the park to play at Many Glacier and the Prince of Wales Hotel for special conventions.

The bass player, Fran Vaupel, and the guitarist, Jim Mason, returned for a third summer with Steve Funk, a piano player. Steve returned with another group and played at Many Glacier in 1961.

The original group still gets together and has played for five of their daughters' weddings. The accordion player, Jim Drasal, has been married to Marie Granum for over 50 years. She is the first girl he met at East Glacier in 1958.

house in suburban Chicago, jamming with Rich on the piano, his friend Tom on guitar and myself on drums. It was the first time I had met Tom, and was really enjoying playing with him. He was a great guitar player.

After we had played for a while, Tom told us of his experience the previous summer playing at Glacier Park Lodge in East Glacier Park, Montana. It sounded really exciting! Tom said that he had the approval from the personnel department in Tucson to bring another band out to the Lodge the next summer. He and wondered if Rich and I would be interested. We said, "Of course we would!" I was finishing up my

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sophomore year in pre-med at the University of Illinois in Chicago, and living at home. What a great opportunity to expand my horizons, be on my own and play music—what could be better?

We got our applications in and began working on music for the summer. I borrowed a small homemade trailer to pull behind my 1963 Ford Falcon convertible, and we started planning our trip from Chicago to East Glacier. Then, a few weeks before we were scheduled to leave, Tom got drafted. He had to leave immediately for the service. Since he was the leader of the band, it looked like we would have to cancel – unless someone else took the lead and we could find another musician.

I said, “I’ll be the leader!” and Rich and I began looking for another guitar player. We couldn’t find one on such short notice, but we did find a bass player named Jim who was just graduating from high school. We played with him a few times and asked if he would like to be part of our band in Montana that summer. He said yes, so the gig was back on. We called our group the “Chi – guys” (Chi – like in Chicago). Kind of corny, I know, but I painted the name on my bass drum and we were off for Big Sky Country.

The trip out was pretty exciting, with the three of us and all our equipment and luggage crammed in my little Ford Falcon convertible and the small borrowed homemade trailer. We got there and got settled, setting up our equipment in the bar and bunking on the ground floor of the annex with the bartenders. Since we all had different hours than the

rest of the employees, we had our own area, away from the sounds of the lodge, so that we could work late and sleep in. We didn’t make it to breakfast very often.

What a great experience we were having: playing music as a job, staying out late, getting to know the other musicians at other bars in East Glacier and just enjoying the beautiful park and all that is GPL!

Then about a month or so into the summer, Jim’s bass broke, and of course there wasn’t any place nearby to get it fixed. He decided to get on the train and go back to Chicago. That left a piano and drums duet, which worked pretty well until Rich got crosswise with the manager and got fired. There wasn’t a whole lot I could do with a band that only had a drummer. I spent a couple of weeks doing odd jobs around the Lodge, helping out where I could, and wondering if my dream summer of playing music at GPL was over.

Then one day, a guy came into the lodge, found me and said, “I hear you’re looking for a piano player.” I

We started playing in the bar and word soon got around to the other employees. A guy named Jay Mackey, who worked on the golf course, came in and said that he played bass and that he had it with him. Again, he turned out to be a fantastic musician, and our trio was up and running for the summer.

I have so many fantastic memories of that summer that I could go on and on... but I’ll leave it at that for now. I understand that John Dobbertin (coordinating the reunion next summer) has located Sandy and Jay. I hope that they will be able to be at the reunion in 2013. I would love to spend some time talking with them, and maybe even play a few songs (that’s what musicians do, you know).

My wife Beth and I have our reservations already made for the reunion next summer. She’s heard about that summer at GPL ever since we met and is looking forward to meeting some of the people and reliving some of the memories with me.

The changes of that summer helped prepare me for many other changes

We called our group the “Chi – guys” (Chi – like in Chicago). Kind of corny, I know, but I painted the name on my bass drum and we were off for Big Sky Country.

said “Yes!” He said, “Hey man, I blow piano.” He had picked up a hitchhiker in his ’57 Cadillac as he was driving through the Park and the hitchhiker had told him about our dilemma. The guy’s name was Sandy Sanderson, and he was (and I’m sure still is) an incredible piano player.

to follow in my life. I graduated pre-med, but instead of med school, I went on to a career in chemistry, working for the same petrochemical company for 35 years. When I took early retirement in 2003, and was planning to just do the part-time job I enjoyed as music director at my church, enough people encouraged

me to go to seminary that Beth and I made a couple of visits to Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. I felt it was my calling for the next phase in life. I currently am the pastor of a Lutheran Church in Chapel Hill, North Carolina and get to sing and play drums with the praise band, in addition to preaching, etc.

It's interesting how even though life is full of changes, there are certain things that remain constant. For me, music is one of them. I look forward to seeing and re-connecting with many of my fellow GPL employees at the July 2013 reunion.

Blessings, Pastor John.

“How Would You Like to Spend 12 Weeks with a Bunch of Musicians You’ve Never Met?”

By Douglas J. “Doug” Kassel, Drummer (Glacier Park Lodge 1973)

My adventure started when Ed Kusby called me to join his group, along with Dave Schoenbrun. I had moved to San Francisco from Chicago only about eight months before.

last minute. My roommates were stunned to hear that I was taking off so suddenly, but I decided it would be a cool opportunity and a nice change for me.

What I didn't know was how Brian Anderson, the leader of the band, had set the process in motion. Apparently, he had applied as a groundskeeper or something, but was told the position had been filled. He was asked: “What else can you do?” He said: “I'm a musician.” They said: “Great, we need a combo.” With their encouragement, he immediately started to put a band together.

I got to know Dave a little better on the drive up from San Francisco. It was hard to even see each other in a chubby little Volvo 544 packed to the gills with an acoustic bass, a set of drums and three months worth of clothes and necessities. The neck of the bass came from the back seat all the way to the windshield right at eye level, making communication difficult.

was on the top floor of the lodge. We dubbed it “The Civil War Hospital Recovery Room” because of the Spartan conditions – brass beds, hardwood floors, and pipes running along the ceiling. We felt as if we were in the attic of an 1860s army hospital.

You could only stand up straight in the center of the room. If you moved too far to the left or right you could hit your head on the sloped ceiling. There was no privacy whatsoever. At least we knew that after work, we could just head upstairs instead of stumbling around in the dark late at night, trying not to wake anyone in the dorms.

We played six nights a week in the lounge. Our work day started at 5:00 p.m. with a cocktail set. We broke for dinner and then played until the bar closed. While we made many friends that summer, our schedule was so different from that of most employees that socializing outside of work was somewhat difficult.

There was probably some understandable resentment from the regular employees who had to get up at the crack of dawn to start working before the guests started stirring. We would be so wired after our shift that we would often party into the night. I remember at least one occasion when we arrived at the employee cafeteria for breakfast still wearing our suits from the night before, trying to blend in with the others who were trying to open their eyes enough to have their morning coffee.

I think we all were a little older than most of the employees. I was all of 23. In addition, unlike most employees, we were making the ultra-princely sum of \$2.26 an hour.

“How would you like to spend 12 weeks in Montana with a bunch of musicians you’ve never met? We leave the day after tomorrow.”

We'd only had one brief meeting before Dave called me and asked what my plans were for the summer. Before I could answer, he said “How would you like to spend 12 weeks in Montana with a bunch of musicians you've never met? We leave the day after tomorrow. We can fit your drums and my bass in my Volvo.”

Apparently, the drummer they had lined up had backed out at the

There had not been time even to meet, let alone rehearse, with the other musicians before our arrival. After a round of introductory handshakes, we brainstormed some tunes for the set list and talked about how we were going to get through our first night, let alone the entire summer.

Unlike the other employees, because we worked late, we lived in the hotel rather than in the dorms. Our room

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We played a mix of jazz and pop standards like “Satin Doll” and got a lot of requests for current hits like “Tie A Yellow Ribbon” (which to this day makes me break out in hives). One of the most unusual requests I remember was for “something by Marian McPartland.” Marian was not really known as a composer of tunes back then (certainly not by the average hotel combo) and her *Piano Jazz* NPR radio program, along with the increased fame that it brought her, would not start for another five years. What was especially ironic was that my mother’s father was jazz cornetist Jimmy McPartland and Marian is ... my grandmother! I’m still a professional musician, and I haven’t heard another request like that before or since.

It’s hard to remember specific nights over that 12-week period almost 40 years ago, but I do remember a very slow night at the end of the summer. The Lodge had pretty much emptied out, so employees were allowed in the bar after work. We launched into “Take The A Train” for the 70th time, to no one in particular. Out of boredom, I looked up and towards the bar. There I saw a whole row of employees sitting on stools with their backs to us, swaying left and right in perfect unison with the music, while the bartender danced the length of the bar, back and forth, waving his hands in the air. It was like something out of a 1940s Betty Boop cartoon. I almost fell off my own stool, I was laughing so hard.

Speaking of falling off stools, I was warned about a drink called the Brave Maiden, which was a plastic ice bucket filled with virtually anything within the bartender’s reach,

plus fruit juice, served with a couple of straws. Sort of a Long Island Iced Tea on steroids – you were advised to bring a designated walker. I thought it was hyperbole, but one night I witnessed a woman tackling a Brave Maiden. Not long after, I saw her riding her barstool to the floor. It took two guys to grab her limbs and carry her out.

We also had a tragedy that summer. One of the bellmen, a young guy of 21, suffered a fatal heart attack while on duty. He apparently had a history of heart trouble, but seemed like a very nice guy who was well liked. We were all stunned. [Compiler’s Note: The bellman’s name was Donald Gradijan. In making hundreds of phone calls to find GPL alums, occasionally we will learn that a person is deceased. Here a relative informed us that “Donald died at the Lodge in July 1973 of an aneurysm.”]

They were also filming *Thunderbolt and Lightfoot* with Clint Eastwood and Jeff Bridges around the park that summer. We saw some celebrities: actors George Kennedy and George Montgomery and an astronaut (I forget which one) who entered and exited the grounds in a helicopter.

As I said, we worked six nights a week, but had most of our days free and we were off on Mondays. We used to take day trips and go camping, or up to Calgary, or horseback riding at Waterton Lakes. I also remember going “on tour” to play a dance at one of the other lodges. It was great to be able to explore Big Sky Country, a part of the country I hadn’t been exposed to before (not to mention my first peek at Western Canada). It was a great experience and a happy memory.

[Compiler’s Note: Doug Kassel still plays drums professionally in the San



“The Medicine Men Quartet of 1959. (Photos courtesy of Jim Mason)

(Continued from previous page)

San Francisco Bay Area. He has played many styles of music with a wide range of musicians, including his grandparents, Jimmy McPartland and Marian McPartland. He can be seen in the 2012 documentary, *In Good Time: The Piano Jazz of Marian McPartland*. He also contributed to the upcoming biography *Shall We Play That One Together?: The Life and Art of Jazz Piano Legend Marian McPartland*.

As a child, Doug worked with *Theater Games* creator Viola Spolin and director Paul Sills at *The Second City* in Chicago, sparking a 30-plus year career in improvisational theater as a teacher, director, and actor with numerous regional and national credits.]

“Hail to the Chief”

By Edward D. “Ed” Kusby, Guitarist and Trombonist (Glacier Park Lodge 1974)

It’s August 8th, 1974, and Glacier Park Lodge has made special preparations for what is expected to be a momentous historical event. In the center of its cavernous interior, on top of the large glass case containing an adult male mountain goat, a matchless example of taxidermy, a television has been placed so that it can be seen from its commanding position by everyone in the lobby. What is especially significant about the placement of the TV, for those who are aware of things astrological, is that the lone character whose appearance is awaited on the screen was born under the sign of Capricorn. He is Richard Nixon, and on this day he is about to resign the presidency of the United States.

Meanwhile, in a room on the top floor of the Lodge, a young man is

warming up a trombone. He had come to work as a musician at Glacier Park Lodge during a break from college in San Francisco. He had been acutely aware of the cascade of events leading up to this day, having heard live radio testimony the previous summer when a high-ranking official described how tape recordings were routinely made in the Oval Office. This same young man, having sublet his apartment before driving north for this summer job, had to bring all his possessions to Montana, including two guitars, an amplifier, and the trombone.

So, as the talking head on the screen above the mountain goat begins to intone “Therefore, I shall resign the Presidency effective at noon tomorrow....” From the balcony of the lobby, where the band has its room, comes the lugubrious sound of a trombone solo. For the musical among us, audibalize if you will the following melody: F, G, A, B-flat, A, G, F, G, F, D-flat, C, B-flat, (with a lingering accent on the D-flat), and you will hear a familiar piece of presidential ceremony music, played here in a funereal mode.

A glorious season, a summit of beautiful times of music, rowing and fishing on Two Medicine Lake, Glacier is a place that comes back to him every time he plays “The Green Leaves Of Summer.” All of the musi-

cians who have worked there will no doubt have many similar timeless memories, but this no-longer-young man wanted to contribute his particular tale of taxidermy, trombone, and political denouement because it was a truly unique moment at Glacier Park Lodge.

I remember something else music-related. I’ll preface this by telling you that after that summer and graduating from San Francisco State in June of ’75, I returned to my home in southern California and continued professional playing, mostly in settings of no great distinction, including many weddings.

While I was at GPL, a nice young couple asked me if I would play for their wedding ceremony at the Lodge. I said that I would, and because I had just written a song inspired by the beauty of the surroundings, I used it as part of the ceremony music. The lyrics are ambiguous as to whom they are addressed, and the ambiguity is intentional – it’s a love song to Nature, inspired by Glacier Park. (This whole thing came back to me because I was looking through my stacks for another piece of music and found an early draft of the song in question, called “I’m Still Discovering You”).

The wedding ceremony included me on classical guitar and Brian Adams on clarinet. Afterwards, I gave the

From the balcony of the lobby, where the band has its room, comes the lugubrious sound of a trombone solo. For the musical among us, audibalize if you will the following melody: F, G, A, B-flat, A, G, F, G, F, D-flat, C, B-flat.

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bride and groom a handwritten keepsake score of that song and two others composed for the occasion. I think I found some graphically talented girl (maybe it was Mike Varner's girlfriend) to create a title page with the couple's name and the date in fancy calligraphy. The manuscript was tied up with a bow and given as a sort of wedding gift to the couple whose names I can't recall but wish I could!

After all these decades of playing, and continuing to play, for weddings I often wonder how some of those happy young couples have fared since that day; whether they made it to 27 years (as I and my wedding-playing musician wife have) and whether the memory of their wedding day is a pleasant one, with the memory of the music being part of the pleasure.

P.S. - "I'm Still Discovering You" is on my minimalist website -- edkusbymusic.com.

A Contemporary Performer

Our co-coordinator for the Glacier Park Lodge Reunion, Joe Blair (GPL '66-'67 & '72) reports:

"In 2002 while staying at GPL I heard beautiful piano music coming from the grand piano in the lobby. It was Mike Rihner playing. That summer he was selling his CD, *Glacier Park Piano Reflections*, which he composed.

"By 2010, Mike was on the payroll at GPL as the entertainment director. When we were there in 2010, he had some local talent playing in the lobby which included some of the summer employees. Take a look at

this website which includes a picture of Mike with Ian B. Tippet."

http://mikerihner.com/?page_id=203

Mike performed at Glacier Park Lodge this past summer and plans to be there in 2013 as well.

"Perhaps some of the former employees (who have musical talent) would want to perform in the lobby during the reunion," Mike offers.

[*Compiler's Note:* Mike Rihner has taught at the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts, University of New Orleans Music Department since 1997. He has composed orchestral suites and symphonic works, including the *New Orleans Suite*, performed at Carnegie Hall in New York in 2009.]

Glacier Park Lodge Bar History

For most of the last 50 years the Glacier Park Lodge bar has been called The Medicine Lounge.

Its current name is The Empire Bar. What was it before 1961?

We e-mailed Prince of Wales Hotel alumnus and Glacier Park historian Ray Djuff with this question. Ray responded:

"If I'm correct, the Medicine Lounge saw two incarnations before its more recent moniker as The Empire Bar.

"The location of the Medicine Lounge was in fact a patio that was later enclosed. It was in the shelter of that patio where the Blackfeet, such as Two Guns, Owen Heavy Breast, Mike Shortman and George Bull Child, would perform their nightly demonstrations of Blackfeet culture. It was quite a large size sitting porch, meant to catch the late

afternoon sun. There was a similar one at Lake McDonald Lodge. Both were closed in.

"After the end of Prohibition in 1933, the hotel company wanted a bar in the hotel."

For information on where the first bar was located at Glacier Park Lodge, Ray contacted gearjammer leader Leroy Lott who in turn e-mailed John Turner (gearjammer 1936-41). John provided this terrific bit of history:

"To answer your question.... Where was the Bar at Glacier Park Lodge....It was located in the Grill Room which was downstairs and as Ray says....The Basement. The Grill Room was the place where the hotel help, gearjammers, and guests gathered every evening for dancing, entertainment, and camaraderie. The gearjammers were not allowed to touch alcohol, but we found a way by having a secret code with the bartender to lace our coca cola with a little rum or bourbon. The Grill Room was also where I met my wife-to-be in the early summer of 1941."

Ray continues the story:

"Eventually, the patio at Glacier Park Hotel, as it was then, was enclosed, becoming the Medicine Room or Medicine Lounge.

"The room as we know it today was modeled, more likely remodeled, by Don Knutson when he leased the railway hotels in 1957 through to the end of 1959. That's also when other serious remodeling was done both at the lodge and other hotels in the chain. Glacier Park Hotel also was renamed Glacier Park Lodge under his watch."

ROGER FOLSTROM *and the Music at Lake McDonald Lodge*

Performers from "A Toast to Broadway," 1958; Marsha Aronow in center foreground; Mary Grace Severson and Bill Cutcliff in center background (photo courtesy of Mary Grace Galvin)

In the late 1950s, Lake McDonald Lodge saw an enormous burst of creativity in the performing arts. Weekly variety shows were staged by the hotel staff for packed audiences of guests and fellow employees. The shows were performed on a stage in the Rec Hall (or "Wreck Hall"), which Mary Grace Galvin describes below.

The director and inspirational force behind these shows was Roger Folstrom. Roger was the lodge's maitre de, as well as the employee music director. He poured great energy into the weekly variety shows -- brainstorming, writing, composing, rehearsing.

Roger was a skilled piano player who accompanied singing and dancing numbers in the variety shows. He coached singers on vocal technique, directed choral groups, and choreographed dance numbers.

Roger was educated at St. Thomas University in St. Paul. He recruited talented fellow "Tommies" (and "Katies" from St. Catherine, a sister college) to work at Lake McDonald and perform there. He went on to a distinguished career as a professor, chairing music education departments at the University of Wisconsin and the University of Maryland.

Roger was devoted to his wife Jeanne, his four children, and his



many friends, including his Glacier performers. He died peacefully in October, 2011, at the age of 77. His obituary notes that he died "surrounded by those who loved him as a favorite choral rendition of 'Steal Away to Jesus' accompanied his spirit to heaven."

Memories of the "Wreck Hall"

By Mary Grace Severson Galvin (Lake McDonald 1957)

The employee shows were performed on a stage that took over one end of the big barmy "auditorium." I grew up calling it the Rec Hall (for recreation hall) or "Wreck" Hall. The stage had a red velvet curtain with gold fringe. It made it through the flood of '64 as the stage was high enough.

Many reviews and programs were performed on that stage. For years, that is where the Park Rangers showed their slide shows for their evening programs. The chairs were pushed back and square dances

and employee dances were held there. For awhile, GPI showed weekly movies there (*True Grit* and *Murder on the Orient Express* were annual attractions). Everyone came with sleeping bags as it was cold in there.

The photograph above is taken of one of Roger's productions, called "A Toast to Broadway." The sketch was based on Roger's ideas, and used the musical talent of the employees in 1958 plus one interloper (me). Bea Van de Mark, dressed in a blue housekeeping uniform, sang "Wouldn't it be lovely" from *My Fair Lady*. Roger lifted many other well known songs from Broadway, used talent where he found it, and played the piano for every bit of it

Bill Cutcliff and I did the Charleston for that show. Since this was a "flapper" number, my mother and I sewed a flapper dress and then trimmed it with fringe that we found in an upholstery shop. My partner

Bill wrote home for a striped flapper-type blazer and a straw hat.

Next door to the Rec Hall (but under the same roof) was the “Grill” which served pastry breakfast goods, and hamburgers the rest of the day, plus beer. I remember the guys working there chasing pack rats!

Memories of Roger

By Jerry Yahna (Lake McDonald 1958)

I fondly remember Roger from the summer of 1958 at Lake McDonald Hotel in Glacier National Park. He was a bright, happy and pleasant fellow who showed a vivid imagination in putting together a group of summer employees who were selected for their artistic talents as well as their willingness to work at a variety of hotel jobs ranging from room maids to clerks in the gift shop to the varied work at the front desk and more.

Roger’s unique personality and creative streak inspired him to come up with weekly variety shows. Shows that sparkled for the guests and employees, including the singers, dancers, and musicians who performed. Roger created weekly entertaining shows that filled the little theatre with enjoyment and a bit of stage fright, and emotions that brought forth laughter and tears. The laughter was spontaneous from both the audience and performers. The fright was in the hearts of the performers who stretched their talents beyond their usual boundaries.

The tears ... how many tears were shed by the audience and performers as we listened to our friends pour out their hearts in song, dance, and music? We all left many on the

old wooden floors of that theatre. I’m sure that fright was also in the heart of Roger, who, with minimal rehearsal time and untried show material sweated through the performance of every singer, dancer, comedian, and musician. He handled it with aplomb and grace with a never ending smile showing everyone that he was confident in his people, pleased and, as it concluded, relieved.

The shows that Roger and his friends put together were not created by professional writers, producers, and directors. No ... they were put together by Roger and a flock of talented university students eager to “do their real stuff” and put up with the sometimes boring and tedious jobs of hotel employees who made beds, cleaned toilets, carried dirty and clean linen, waited on tables, cleaned the premises, sang or performed for luncheon and dinner guests, smiled at guests, swept walkways, sold souvenirs and any number of the myriad jobs in a unique, rustic, historic resort hotel.

The glue that held this group together and encouraged them to rise above their hotel jobs to become opera singers, jazz musicians, dancers, comedians, and entertainers of all varieties was The Man -- Roger Folstrom. I cannot recall ever seeing him with a discouraging or unhappy expression on his face. He showed only optimism and trust. Optimism that the unproven performer would come up with a great entertainment idea and trust that his flock of various performers would rise above the normal to reach higher levels than they had ever achieved before. Roger inspired all!

Roger’s task would have broken the spirit of lesser humans but he seemed to delight in the challenges with which he was faced. And his imagination was endless... Imagine creating a new variety show each week - starting from scratch. And even with all the pressures of this, Roger managed to find the energy and time to become a special friend of everyone who came in contact with him. He and I didn’t have a lot of time to be together but he became a Special Buddy to me – and probably to nearly everyone else in his flock. And to top it off, he managed to deal with the hotel administrative folks in a way that endeared them to him and, through him, brought out the best in their employees and entertainers.

Glacier Park, and specifically, everyone in contact with Lake McDonald and its Great Hotel were truly blessed to have been a part of the Greatest Glacier Group Ever, the McD ‘58ers! It didn’t happen by accident. It happened because of the uniquely creative and humane personality of our inspiring, indefatigable leader, Roger Folstrom.

Memories of 1958

By John Nyberg (Lake McDonald 1958)

Lake McDonald Lodge in the summer of 1958 was the symbol of our halcyon days. Some of us had just graduated from college; others were entering their junior or senior years. My memory of that summer is one of crisp mornings and afternoons of blue skies and water skiing from the Severson dock next to the hotel. Roger Folstrom was at the center of our “night jobs” in the entertainment endeavors for the hotel guests, camp-

(Continued from previous page)

ers and the many nocturnal creatures of the Alpine forest surrounding us. Roger loved Glacier Park and he was perfect as the entertainment director, assessing our varied and sometimes questionable talents.

My photos show innocence and enthusiasm in our faces – we were young and full of hope for our futures outside of working in what we considered to be menial hotel jobs. But I remember one of the hotel managers stressing to us that while our paychecks were slim, we should remember that we were not “cheap labor.” That made us feel better; but besides our many opportunities to hike and explore the splendor of Glacier Park, it was our musical shows organized and directed by Roger Folstrom which gave shape to our summer season.

Roger had such a great command of the keyboard and vocal technique which he used to construct and rehearse our productions. He went on in his professional life to positions of leadership in music education and in church music in the state of Mary-

land where he and Jeanne made their life together. I saw him several times at conventions of the Music Educators National Conference.

Our group of 1958 was reconvened at the park in the summer of 1998 after forty years. This was possible mostly through the efforts of Nan Kuehn of Omaha who started organizing three years before the reunion and has kept us in contact these last years. We have had mini-reunions in the Twin Cities where we can enjoy each other’s company. Roger was still the central figure of these events which were scheduled to coincide with his family’s annual lake vacation in Minnesota. Now that our numbers and our mobility are diminishing we look back on the great joy that Roger helped us achieve at the park and in ensuing years.

As a tribute to Roger Folstrom I wish to quote Stephen Sondheim from *Into the Woods*:

Sometimes people leave you
Half-way through the wood.
Do not let it grieve you,

No one leaves for good.
You are not alone.
No one is alone.

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when you crossed the great divide. The ambulance arrived at Cardston at 5 a.m., Sunday, June 26, but by then you were gone.

Hindsight gives pretty good vision, and looking back, there’s a whole host of things we could have done different, or not done at all. Worst of it is, you took a hard hit in a soft spot and death takes no prisoners.

We lost a good man that night, Bill. Many years have passed since that warm June night, but the heartache still lingers.

And as you know, that was also the last road trip for Red # 100. It got all smashed to pieces and never drove again. We lost a good man and a good bus that night, Bill.

June 25 comes around on the calendar every year, Bill, and with it come painful memories. I just wanted to let you know that two holes in my heart are still there, one for Red # 100, and a bigger one for you.

