

# THE INSIDE TRAIL



Voice of the Glacier Park Foundation  Summer 2013  Volume XXVIII, No. 2

## 100 YEARS AT Glacier Park Lodge



*Edward R. Murrow and Cedric Adams  
smooching the queen of Glacier Park  
Lodge in 1957.*

*(Rosella Dambowy photo)*

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# 100 Years at Glacier Park Lodge

This summer marks the centennial of Glacier Park Lodge (known until the late 1950s as Glacier Park Hotel, and informally as “Entrance”). It opened on June 15, 1913, without fanfare.

The first employees arrived only hours before the first guests, and the celebration was deferred for a week, until they could be properly trained.

That first summer of 1913, however, saw many picturesque events. The Glidden Tour, an annual long-distance auto race, was held along the Great Northern Railway line from the Twin Cities to Glacier Park, with an awards dinner at the lodge. In September, a 75<sup>th</sup> birthday party (with 600 people attending) was held there for James J. Hill, the founder of the Great Northern Railway.

The Great Northern built the lodge under the leadership of James’s son Louis Hill. In 1960, it was sold

to Glacier Park, Inc. (GPI), which (after several changes of ownership) still operates it today. GPI is hosting events this summer to mark the centennial of the lodge.

The biggest centennial event is the Glacier Park Lodge employee reunion from July 16 to 19. Almost every room in the lodge has been booked by alumni from many eras, dating back to the 1940s. About 200 alumni, plus friends and family members, will attend.

Lobby programs will be held on all three evenings in conjunction with the reunion. Historical reflections will be given, and music will be performed by alumni, by GPI enter-

tainment director Mike Rihner, and by Blackfeet artist Jack Gladstone. Historical talks, lodge tours, red bus tours, and a hike over Scenic Point will be available during the days.

The Glacier Park Foundation salutes the reunion’s coordinators, John Dobbertin (GPL ’62-’63) and Joe Blair (’66-’67, ’72) for their hundreds of hours of volunteer work. We also thank the members of their supporting committee, Carol Blair (’72), Jack Barry (’73-’74), Sabra Hester Doggett (’68-’69), and Marion Midby Keating (’57). Details of the event (including the many colorful tales to be told there) will be shared in the Fall *Inside Trail*.

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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 Glacier National Park

## **GPL Centennial Observed**

The centennial of Glacier Park Lodge on June 22 was celebrated in grand style on the grounds of the hotel. The event was planned to replicate elements of the inaugural celebration of June 22, 1913. The 1913 event had featured music by the Kalispell Elks Club band. The centennial event began with the Flathead Valley Community Band playing old Souza favorites. The band played the national anthem as the flag was raised by Vietnam veterans.

Ron Cadrette, the general manager of Glacier Park, Inc. (GPI) emceed the event. He reviewed the history of the lodge, paying tribute to the Great Northern Railway, which built it, and to the Blackfeet people within whose reservation it stands.

Mr. Cadrette pointed out iconic features on the grounds of the lodge, including the magnificent flower beds. He thanked Fran Noreen and her team of gardeners, pointing out that “an environment where it can snow one day and be 70 degrees the next is challenging.”

Mr. Cadrette also spoke about the Blackfeet tipis on the front lawn. These tipis (created by the Blackfeet artist Darrell Norman) feature a night sky with the Big and Little Dippers, falling stars, and an open space below to be filled with interpretations of the dreams of family members.

Speakers at the celebration included Blackfeet elder James Kipp, a representative of Senator John Tester, and several representatives of GPI and its parent, the Viad Corporation (Paul Dykstra, Joe Fassler and Rex Maughn).

A Centennial Dinner in the Moccasin Room was based upon the menu from James J. Hill’s birthday party at the lodge in 1913 -- “Going-to-the-Sun canapés,” beef tenderloin with fresh mushrooms, mountain trout meuni-

ere, Parisienne potatoes served with claret, stuffed bell peppers, Glacier salad (mixed greens with assorted dressings), and assorted desserts.

## **Innovations and Renovations**

GPI has completed extensive renovations at the various Glacier facilities for the 1913 season. Lake McDonald Lodge features four new guest suites in the old Cobb Cottage and eight new hostel-type guest rooms in the old Snyder Dormitory. New roofs were installed on the Jammer Dorm, the maintenance building, and the post office at that location. A Creekside Reading Room also was completed at Lake McD.

New guest room furniture has been added both in the Main wing and in the Annex at Many Glacier. Public showers at Swiftcurrent have been remodeled. Complimentary guest wi-fi has been added at Swiftcurrent, Rising Sun, and the Village Inn.

## **Superintendent Appointed**

Jeff Mow has been appointed the new Superintendent of Glacier National Park, effective August 25.

Mow succeeds Chas Cartwright, who resigned at the end of 2012. Kym Hall served as acting superintendent and very capably handled Glacier’s red bus crisis in the interim (see the Spring 2013 *Inside Trail*).

Mow, 54, has spent 25 years in the National Park Service, primarily in Alaska. He began his career as a seasonal ranger in Glacier Bay, served in the Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park in Skagway, and held several senior posts in Gates of the Arctic National Park. He has been Acting Superintendent in Denali, and

presently serves as the superintendent of Kenai Fjords National Park in southeast Alaska.

Mow also served as the Department of the Interior’s incident commander after the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. He serves as a policy analyst for the National Park Service’s Climate Change response Program. He and his family are avid hikers, bikers, skiers and canoeists.

## **Multiple Concession Bids**

Multiple parties have submitted bids for a new 16-year concession contract in Glacier. The Park Service called for proposals in December 2012. The bidding deadline was April of this year.

A Park Service panel presently is reviewing the bids in the Regional Office in Denver. The Park Service will not disclose the identity of the bidders until a contract is awarded later this summer. The incumbent concessioner, GPI, has publicly acknowledged submitting a bid, but its competitor or competitors are unknown.

Glacier Park, Inc. has held the concession rights in Glacier since 1961. The most recent long-term concession contract extended from 1981 to 2005. Since then, GPI has managed the facilities under a series of one-year extensions.

## **Highline Hiker Killed**

Charles Huseman, a 64-year-old hiker, from Washington state, slipped and fell to his death on the Highline trail on June 26. Huseman slipped on snow in the Rimrocks area, about a mile west of Logan Pass, and fell over cliffs about 100 feet to Going-to-the-Sun Road. The Highline had not yet been opened because of steep and dangerous snow.

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

“There’s a fight in Room 363! You have to break it up!” cried the telephone operator at Many Glacier Hotel. The lounging bellmen sprang up, raced down the Long Hall and went charging up the stairs. In the lead was Chip Smith, who weighed 300 pounds and played center for the University of Nebraska. The rest of us were eager to see the spectacle of Chip breaking up the fight.

Chip jammed the passkey into the doorknob and burst into Room 363. There, suspended in midair, were two small boys bouncing on the beds. An old lady in the room downstairs had misinterpreted the noise and had reported it as a fight. I’ll never forget the gaping mouths and bugged-out eyes of the two boys as Chip erupted into the room.

A major aspect of the bellmen’s job at Many Glacier was troubleshooting, usually in response to requests or complaints phoned in by guests. The telephone operators would pass these errands along to us, sometimes verbally and on an urgent basis (as in the foregoing case of the “fight”). More frequently, errands came in the form of handwritten notes: “TOILET RUNNING IN ROOM 16;” “NO HEAT IN ROOM 333;” “ROOM 245 DOES NOT HAVE A WINDOW SCREEN;” “BAT IN THE HALLWAY ON FOURTH FLOOR MAIN.”

Sometimes the errands were preposterous. My notebooks show that we once received a complaint of “noisy neighbors upstairs” from Room 461 -- a room on the top floor of the hotel! On another occasion, guests in a magnificent lakeside room complained that “We have to look down

# TROUBLESHOOTING

## at Many Glacier Hotel

*John Whitaker and Paul Hoff awaiting trouble at the Bellmen’s Desk in 1979 (Laura Chihara photo)*



*(Laura Chihara photo.)*

to look at the lake and then look up to look at the mountains. We want a room where you can see the whole scene at a glance!”

### **Robbing Peter to Pay Paul**

Sometimes we got complaints about our motley furniture. One note complained that an ancient dresser had two drawers with square knobs and one drawer with round knobs. A fussy guest, instead of enjoying this Dickensian eccentricity, demanded that it be changed.

This square knobs/round knobs problem exemplified a sort of errand which was especially challenging and ticklish. The only possible way to solve it was to rob Peter to pay Paul -- transferring the problem to another room and hoping that the guests there wouldn’t complain.

Window screen problems sometimes had to be solved in that way. In the 1970s, Many Glacier always seemed to be short of screens. The frames were weathered, deformed, and decrepit, and sometimes had to be pulled out of service. When the carpenter shop was backed up (as was usual), there weren’t enough

screens to go around. When a guest complained of a missing screen, our only recourse often was to take one from another room.

My notebook records a nightmarish episode where a guest demanded a screen. We furtively took screens from room after room, but they all were too narrow or too wide. Then, to complete the fiasco, another guest returned to his room just in time to find us absconding with his screen!

### **The Honeymooners**

One of our wackiest adventures involved a honeymooning couple. The couple had made wedding-night reservations for one of the best rooms in the hotel. Just before they arrived, the bride’s uncle appeared at the front desk. He convinced a naïve room clerk to give him a key so that he could “prepare the room.”

The uncle then engaged in predictable tomfoolery. He short-sheeted the bed, tied tin cans to the bed-springs, put shaving-cream messages on the mirror, and unpinned the hinges on closet doors.



When the honeymooners arrived and discovered all the booby traps, they were good-natured. They laughed about it and asked the front desk to transfer them to another room (fortunately, there was one available). But nobody thought to tell the housekeepers about the situation and have the original room put in order.

Late that evening, *another* honeymoon couple arrived at the hotel. They were several days into their honeymoon trip, and did not have a reservation. The night clerk (ignorant of what had happened earlier) innocently sent this couple to the disordered room. The funhouse conditions there amused the groom, but incensed the weary bride.

The midnight bellman got a call to report on the double to the room. After moving the guests out, with no housekeepers available, he was obliged to spend the rest of his shift remaking beds, untying cans, and trying to make the room habitable again.

### **Cold and Heat**

A major category of problems involved excessive heat and cold. These problems arose from various factors -- dysfunctional radiators, weather, peculiarities of the rooms. Once the telephone operator left us a pair of notes reporting: "ROOM 268: 'IT'S TOO HOT!'" "ROOM 270: 'IT'S TOO COLD!'" -- a conundrum typical in that era.

On chilly days, the prevailing west wind howled in through chinks and cracks in the lakeside rooms. We would cover the cracks with masking tape, which was effective but not genteel. Next day, the housekeepers would strip off the unsightly tape, and on the next chilly evening we would go and put fresh tape on the cracks again.

Cold nights brought calls for extra blankets. The evening bellmen sometimes exhausted the entire supply in the Blanket Room taking care of lakeside guests. We would then have to hand out bedspreads. Some evenings the boilers were fired late in order to heat the lakeside rooms -- and then the mountainside rooms would call en masse to complain that it was too hot.

One room was *always* too hot, because it was located over the hot water tank. There was little to do about incessant complaints that came from this room but to move the guests, if that was possible, or to crack the door on its chain in order to create a cross-draft, if it was not.

### **Bat Patrol**

Another troubleshooting category was wildlife incursions. No large mammals invaded Many Glacier during the 1970s, but the bellmen did have to chase out ground squirrels, throw towels over birds, and knock innumerable bats out of the air. It was commonplace to meet a colleague trudging off to a distant hallway carrying an ice bucket and a broom, and to hear him say tersely: "Bat patrol!"

The most memorable note that ever came to me from the switchboard reported that there was a "FROG IN ROOM 456." This seemed incredible. Frogs are rarely seen in Glacier, and how in the world would one get up to the fourth floor?

*Chip Smith (perhaps exhausted from breaking up the "fight in Room 363") and fellow bellmen John Hagen, Mike Anton, Steve White and Jim Donohue in 1975 (John Hagen photo)*



The "frog" turned out to be a bat, which was sitting in a sink drain, poking his head up like a soldier in a foxhole. I humanely expelled him by trapping him between two drinking glasses and throwing him out the nearest door. I'm sure that the guests would have been happier if he had been a frog.

Adventures like these are rarer nowadays than they were in the 1970s. Many Glacier has been renovated extensively, with a new roof, new insulation, improvements in wiring, plumbing, and siding, lots of new furniture, and better window screens. But a rustic lodge in the heart of the wilderness always will generate colorful challenges, and the bellmen always will be on call to resolve them.

# HIKING IN GLACIER *in the 1940s*

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

It could be fairly said in the 1940s and 1950s that the employees in the Park owned Glacier. Our era of near monopoly of the back country came just after the days when large numbers of people still rode horses, and the great Park Saddle Horse Company trips had up to six hundred horses carrying dudes on incomparable horseback tours all over the interior of the Park. A watershed occurred, however, with the closure and irreversible decay of the back country tent camps during World War II, and thereafter the big horseback trips were discontinued.

On the other hand, it was only after the time we worked in Glacier that the healthy vogue for hiking and camping caught on in a big way in the United States. It ultimately filled the mountainous back country with backpackers, hikers, and climbers. For a short period in between those two phases of the history of the Park the automobile reigned supreme, and not many of the visitors ventured very far from their vehicles or the buses. For the most part the only people besides Park employees who were regularly seen on the trails were exceptionally interesting and adventurous souls or half-mad eccentrics.

The magnificent chalets, Granite and Sperry, were practically empty much of the time, and they constantly lost money for the Great Northern Railroad, which would have closed them if the Park Service had permitted them to. And so for all practical purposes the interior of the Park belonged to us, the trail crew people, and the Park Service people.

The trails continued to be beautifully maintained in this period before it was decided that all spare tax monies should go into the pockets of larcenous defense contractors, fiscal criminals, and other big-time and little-time thieves, pork-

barrellers, and hangers-on. The crystal lakes and rivers of the Park had not yet been infected by Giardia, and we drank freely and copiously from the little streamlets and cataracts that crossed the trails everywhere.

The danger of grizzlies never crossed our minds, and we hiked blissfully without giving a thought to them. Veteran back-country rangers, acting on the archaic idea that a human life is more important than that of a beast, actually shot bears if there was an indication they were a threat. On my way to Granite once I was surprised to see a ranger in the distance kneeling with a high-powered rifle raised toward some low trees and underbrush. Another ranger was standing next to him. I later found out they were getting rid of a troublesome grizzly. The rangers did not make a big fuss about it, but quietly used good judgment in disposing of dangerous animals at the same time as they assured there would be a viable population of all species of animals in the Park.

Memory of those completely anxiety-free days on the trails anywhere in the Park brings out my curmudgeonly tendencies, when I compare that relaxed atmosphere with the one that currently prevails. Now you have to be slightly concerned most of the time about what you might see coming at you around the next curve of a trail, even a well-travelled one. Practically the only problem bears in the forties and fifties were the beggar black bears, like the cinnamon "Glacier Gertie" and her cubs, lining up for handouts along the Going-to-the-Sun Road and stopping traffic. A few of these bears became raiders and scavengers at campgrounds as well. They have been cleared away as a menace to car travellers, but the grizzlies have subsequently increased in numbers and too often have threatened, maimed, and killed hikers on the trails and campgrounds of the Park.

## **Hiking Friends, Equipment, and Weather**

Starting right at the beginning in 1947 I fell in with a group of employees who wanted to see as much of the interior of the Park as possible. Some of them had worked at Glacier the previous summer when it reopened, or even before the war. We shared the powerful temptation always to push on a little further in order to see what new views might be around the next corner or on the next ledge, and curiosity and expectancy made hiking and climbing easy for us. We were constantly seeking out new places to explore.

With such companions adventure came almost automatically. They differed radically in age, backgrounds, abilities, and interests, but the mountains brought out the best in all of them. Several of us have kept in contact, and some of those early expeditions gave rise to favorite anecdotes that have been told back and forth among us ever since.

All the free time that was available to me in 1947 as a houseboy made it possible from the outset of my time in Glacier to undertake ambitious trips or take shorter ones close to the hotel that would occupy only an afternoon and maybe the early part of an evening. This included several of the best-known hikes, such as those to Redrock and Bullhead Lakes, Iceberg Lake, Ptarmigan Tunnel, Grinnell Glacier, and Cracker Lake. Any one of these is a great first hike because it introduces you to matchless mountain scenery very quickly.

The designers of the incomparable trail network in Glacier were said to have numbered among them some of the engineers who had built the Great Northern. They were not easily turned back by obstacles such as cliffs that had to have routes blasted across them, and they saw to it the hikes got up above the

timberline as soon as possible. With relatively little effort hikers on these trails suddenly find themselves surrounded by unobscured breathtaking views on every side.

If you were at all inclined to hiking you were automatically captivated by the fantastic opportunities for adventuring in the wilderness high country. Glacier offered so generously and readily. There were something under a thousand miles of good trails in the Park, which made it one of the most extensive and daring networks of mountain trails in the world.

Most of us had no elaborate gear for even our most ambitious expeditions. We did not patronize big-time hikers' and climbers' stores selling designer boots and all the present remarkable variety of outdoors supplies. The most modern device we had was the useful little thumb and forefinger can opener that was designed for opening K-Rations and the like during the conflagration that was just over. The Army-Navy stores provided surplus boots, ancient backpacks, and kapok sleeping bags for those who even thought to supply themselves with these amenities.

Most of us made do with tennis shoes and paper bags for carrying our lunches. I once achieved a degree of notoriety for using an old college briefcase for that purpose. There was no such thing as freeze-dried foods available to us, and some of us ended up carrying ludicrously heavy loads of canned foodstuffs on overnight or longer trips.

We fared forth on hiking trips regardless of what weather our days off might bring, and we soon discovered that the stormiest, soggiest, coldest hikes could be as exciting and rewarding as hikes on sunny days. The weather in Glacier is notoriously changeable. It was impossible to tell what might happen, and frequently a very unpromising blustery day can suddenly turn beautiful. Conversely, on what started out as a flawless day, terrific drenching and freezing storms could come up out of nowhere. When the weather was sunny on the eastern

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side of the Park it could be all soaked in, raining and blowing ferociously on the west side, and vice versa.

One of the first lessons all of us who took hiking seriously learned was never to step out on a trail without a slicker, regardless of how cloudless the skies might be. Several of us took a certain wild pleasure in fierce weather, if we had our rain slickers along. When the storms descended on us our minds were set to enjoy whatever nature threw at us. There are few things more thrilling and awesome than watching a massive storm thundering across a valley toward you if you have found a reasonably sheltered spot and have rain gear and perhaps an extra sweater.

We soon found that getting wet was no calamity and threw ourselves with a certain amount of gleeful abandon into wading through the saturating underbrush overhanging the trails and slog-ging ankle deep through the quagmires that the trails often became. Nothing could be done about it anyhow, and so the best thing was to enjoy it. You could always get cleaned up later and wash the mud off your feet, footwear, and clothing.

Even in good weather when bridges were out or creeks swollen, or when we were striking out cross-country, we grew accustomed to taking off boots and socks, rolling up trouser legs, and wading through achingly cold water on painful and slick rocks. I usually liked to use the support of a handy branch picked up along the shore during these crossings, after having had the unpleasant experience of slipping on the rocks and falling into the icy drink.

### **Surprising Novices**

Some of the employees were stay-at-homes. To them the idea of walking several miles anywhere seemed akin to madness. Set down as we were in that spectacular place that cried out to be explored, I could not understand them. On the other hand, many of the young people who would never have thought of walking even a few blocks at home if a car were available were surprised to find that they could hike ten to fifteen miles and find it a great adventure.

I was much impressed by the discovery that some of the lightest and most fragile-looking girls, who had been sheltered back home all their lives, could gamely trip along on fifteen to eighteen-mile hikes in low tennis shoes or even moccasin-like street shoes and return no more fatigued or worse for the wear than the rest of us. They would have regarded walking a mile or so as an intolerable hardship back in Minneapolis. All that was required was youth and the idea that it was a big adventure, and there were few prodigies of hiking and climbing they could not perform.

At times we did overdo it. There was an occasional bad experience with over-exposure to the sun and heat, complicated by fatigue. And I have looked with amazement at some of the most massive blisters I have ever seen, covering practically the whole of a tender heel and sole that was not yet hardened to the wear and tear of hikes on rough, steep trails. But the resilience of these young sufferers was remarkable, and sometimes in a week they would be back on the trails again.

# FOUR YEARS, FOUR LODGES



*Rosella on the  
Iceberg Lake Trail  
in 1961 and 2010.  
(Rosella Dambowy  
photos)*

*By Rosella Dambowy (1957-60)*

## 1957 -- Glacier Park Lodge

It all began when I ran out of money for my spring quarter tuition. I knew the Great Northern Railroad hired people to work in Glacier Park. Their office was in downtown St. Paul. I went there to inquire about a job. I was told that they needed workers now!

When could I go? I said that I'd be ready in a week. I went home to the farm and told my mom and stepdad what I was about to do. The next week, on a beautiful April day with no snow, my family took me to the Great Northern depot in St. Cloud, Minnesota.

The twenty-plus hour train ride seemed to take forever! I anticipated seeing mountains as the train reached North Dakota. When the mountains finally came into view long afterward in Montana, we still had hours to go.

There was snow everywhere in East Glacier. My room was in the Chalet with another Minnesotan, Marion Midby. Our room was on second floor above the front door, and was pervaded by the constant tramp of employees coming and going.

My first job was cleaning the dorms while

everyone was at work. After making the beds and cleaning the bathrooms, I went to help clean Glacier Park Lodge, a room at a time. We carried water to the upper floor. Lucille LeMay brought a hot plate so that we could heat the water.

Lucille was the beautician at the hotel when the season began. I was to be a waitress in the new Tipi Room, but it was not ready for two weeks. In the meantime, my job was to make floral arrangements for the dining room tables. The cut flowers came by train from Spokane.

The Tipi Room was on the site of the present gift shop. It featured short orders -- coffee, sandwiches, hamburgers, French fries, malts and ice cream sundaes. A photo in *The Inside Trail* (Summer 2007) shows me making malts there.

There was a queen contest at Glacier Park Lodge that summer of 1957. Edward R. Murrow, a famous newscaster from CBS News in New York, was there, as was Cedric Adams, a newscaster from the Twin Cities. One of my photos shows these two dignitaries primly smooching the queen!

Near the season's end, the manager, Mr. O'Donnell, came looking for me. I wondered what I had done wrong. He reassured me, and asked me to be a din-

ing room waitress for celebrity guests who were coming to the hotel.

I had the great pleasure of being a waitress for the actor Gary Cooper. He was a very gracious man. In the course of his stay, we took a picture where he kissed me on the cheek. The hotel's electrician, "Two Wire," then came to me and asked if he could kiss the cheek that Gary Cooper had kissed.

I made friends with the Schaufs, the owners of Bison Creek Dude Ranch (now the Bison Creek B&B). I didn't do much hiking that summer. Instead, I'd go out horseback riding at the ranch. Les Schauf said to me, "Why don't you come out and help on your day off and you can ride all you want." Wow! I couldn't pass that up!

## 1958 -- Many Glacier Hotel

As the spring of 1958 rolled along, all I had on my mind was Glacier Park. I went to see the Personnel Director, Mr. Litella, and told him that I'd like to go back to East Glacier. He said, "You're going to be a cocktail waitress at Many Glacier." I told him I didn't want to do that, and he responded, "I'm not hiring you." I quickly replied, "I'll be a cocktail waitress!"

Once I got settled into my duties, it turned out to be a terrific summer. My shifts began at 11 AM or noon or 4 PM or 6PM -- what an opportunity to hike and climb! I hiked with rangers as well as with fellow



employees. I wore saddle shoes! After finishing, I'd write down the name of the hike and the distance.

One gorgeous summer day, my fellow cocktail waitress Shirley and I decided to walk to Iceberg Lake. Shirley wore her bathing suit and I was in blue jeans. Who should come along the trail but Mel Ruder, the legendary editor of *The Hungry Horse News*, with his camera? The next week our picture was in the newspaper.

That summer, someone planned an ambitious hike to Goat Haunt. There were delays, and we didn't get underway until after 4 PM. We walked all night. There were three flashlights among us, two of which burned out almost immediately. At Goat Haunt, we caught a boat to the Prince of Wales Hotel, where someone picked us up and brought us back to Many Glacier.

### 1959 -- Two Medicine

My third season, 1959, started out at East Glacier. I was in the salad and dessert department for about two weeks. I requested a transfer to Two Medicine and it was granted. I was a breakfast cook and I made pies as well. If a guest caught a fish and requested that it be cooked, I would do it. I also helped out in the camp store.

There were four of us at this location -- Mr. and Mrs. Sweening, Ron from Idaho, and me. The ranger would come in and join us for coffee. The setting was beautiful, with Two Medicine Lake, Mt. Sinopah and Rising Wolf Mountain. It was all visible from my room.

One Sunday morning, Ron and I hiked to Dancing Lady Mountain (which at that time was known as Squaw Mountain). We took our lunch and an old bedsheet from Bison Creek Dude Ranch. We spread out the bedsheet on the mountainside to let people at the hotel and at the ranch know that we had made it. And sure enough, when returned we could see it from East Glacier and from Bison Creek!

One midsummer morning in the kitchen, a fellow worker brought a tall man to

speak to me. It was a prearranged job interview. The setting was unusual but appropriate. I was to be the Food Service Supervisor for the University of Minnesota Morris. It was a nine-month job. I could still work in the Park!

### 1960 -- Lake McDonald Lodge

It's 1960. I'm at Lake McDonald Lodge. To my good fortune, I don't have to live in a dormitory as most employees do. My room is in Cobb's Cabin by the lake.

My job that summer was in the bakery. Since I had to be at work early, Mr. Tippet, the Lake McDonald manager, said I should have a location that was quiet -- and it was! Many times I had a split shift, early in the morning and again in the afternoon. I made sure that all the desserts went out properly.

Many afternoons I would sit by the lake. It was about thirty feet from my door! Even when I was in bed, I could hear the waves lapping the shore.

I have been asked by many people what was my favorite place in the Park? My answer invariably is: wherever I was. How could you not like a sunset on Lake McDonald, or looking at Mt. Sinopah in the sunset, or listening to the waves lapping on the shore of Lake Josephine, or looking into the distance at Dancing Lady? What remains constant in all those places is the breathtaking beauty of Glacier National Park.

It was a wonderful adventure. And, by the way, my first roommate from 1957, Marion Midby Keating, and I, still keep in touch!



*Mel Ruder, editor of **The Hungry Horse News**, tired out from lugging his huge camera up and down the Iceberg Lake trail in 1958 (Rosella Dambow photo)*



*Hanging a bedsheet on Dancing Lady Mountain to signal "mission accomplished" to friends at the lodge (Rosella Dambow photo)*

By Dirk Larsen (Glacier Park Boat Co., 1955-56)

I was a student at the law school at the University of Montana in 1955. Art Burch, the owner-operator of the Glacier Park Boat Company, came to the campus to recruit boat captains. I was fortunate to be hired. In early June I drove up to the Burch cabin, about a quarter mile south of Many Glacier Hotel. Four-to-five-foot snowdrifts surrounded the cabin, as it was a late spring thaw that year. My co-captain, Les Skow, and I settled into our room in the southeast corner of the Burch cabin.

On our first few days we learned how to run the motor launches. We were required to pass a Coast Guard test to qualify, then began to transport passengers across Swiftcurrent Lake, where the tourists hiked across a small hill and then boarded a second boat to cross Lake Josephine. A ranger naturalist would usually accompany us on at least one trip each day. Most of them were college professors who had different specialties – e.g., botany, geology.

My personal favorite was J. Gordon Edwards, who was an entomologist. He became the preeminent mountain climber in the park and wrote books on how to ascend the peaks and find the special high places like Shangri-La. Each ranger had a lecture that he would give to the tourists on the boat. When there was no ranger on board, we would deliver the lecture. We would pick and choose from what we heard from the rangers and add our own comments.

On one of our first trips of the season we took a ranger and a group of about fifteen tourists to the far end of Lake Josephine. They took the hike to Grinnell Lake. The trail was still mostly covered in snow. We returned late in the afternoon to pick them up. The wind was howling down off Grinnell Glacier. It was blowing directly in our faces as we brought the boat to the dock. Les was at the wheel and I was at the bow of the boat. The ranger was on the dock with

# “THROW ME THE ROPE!”

## *Famous Last Words on a Glacier Boat Cruise*

By Dirk Larsen (Glacier Park Boat Company, 1955-56)

the tourists.

I got the bowline secured to the dock. I had the stern line in my hand, but the wind was blowing the stern of the boat away from the dock. The ranger, in his Smokey-the-Bear hat and green uniform, looked impressive and authoritative to me. He yelled, “Throw me the rope!” Being young and inexperienced, I did so. The wind caught the rope, and it was quickly sucked underwater, where it wrapped around the shaft of the propeller.

Now the boat was dead in the water at the far end of Lake Josephine. No one was happy. The tourists were convinced that they would never return to civilization. I told Les to stay with them and walk them back to Many Glacier.

I ran back to the Burch cabin in fifteen minutes (setting a record, I believe) to tell Art the bad news. He was a true gentleman. He did not panic. He was calm. When the tourists arrived back at the hotel, about an hour later, he apologized and refunded their tickets.

The evenings are long in June, so Art and I returned to the stranded boat. I was armed with a linoleum knife and



*The Good Ship “Big Chief”  
(Photo Dirk Larsen)*

grim determination. The water in Lake Josephine comes down off Grinnell Glacier. There were still snow drifts around the edges of the lake. The water wasn’t frozen, but it was close. Did I mention that the propeller is fifteen feet back under the stern?

I dove under the boat three times, each time hacking at the rope as long as I could hold my breath. After finally freeing the propeller on the third dive, as I was standing on the stern, my body went rigid and I fell back into the water. I thought that I would drown, but the water jolted me into motion and I climbed back up on the boat.

Art started the engine, the propeller turned, and we started back to the north end of Lake Josephine. On the dock there was an angel waiting. I didn’t know who she was and still don’t, but she was a beautiful young woman with a blanket and a beer. I have never appreciated either one more!

# GREAT SHORT STORIES OF GLACIER NATIONAL PARK

From the time it was first published in 1981, *The Inside Trail* has featured great short stories of Glacier Park. In addition to park news, public affairs, and scholarly articles, we've sought to provide a forum for colorful anecdotes and memoirs of the park. We've published hundreds of stories, drawn from every location and every era.

Recently we've published an anthology of some of the best of these tales. *Glacier from the Inside Out* is carried in many bookstores in and around the park and is available online. (To order online, go to [www.lulu.com/spotlight/glacier75](http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/glacier75).)

The anthology includes 111 delightful stories. They are collected in chapters focused on the individual lodges, on the red buses, and on prime topics (e.g., "Bear Country," "Fires and Floods"). To whet your interest, here are sketches of a handful of these tales.

"*Backing Out of an Avalanche*" is one of the greatest jammer tales ever told. Tom McFarling (1950) was deadheading on his first run over Logan Pass, amid fog and driving snow. "Then I heard it ... like a freight train right in the front seat beside me." An avalanche of snow had thundered across the road in front of him, covering the hood of his bus to the windshield. Looking back, he found the fog so thick that he couldn't see his rear wheels – or the edge of the road, or the yawning cliff below. To learn what happened next, read the book!

"*Hang on Tight!*" was headlined as "the Ultimate Glacier Hitchhiking Story." Dave Shoup (Swiftcurrent and Many Glacier, 1973-76) and two companions climbed Little Chief Mountain. They were benighted on the slopes, and had a harrowing descent. Exhausted, they reached Going-to-the-Sun Road at the

upper end of St. Mary Lake at about 2:30 AM. They had to be at work by daybreak.

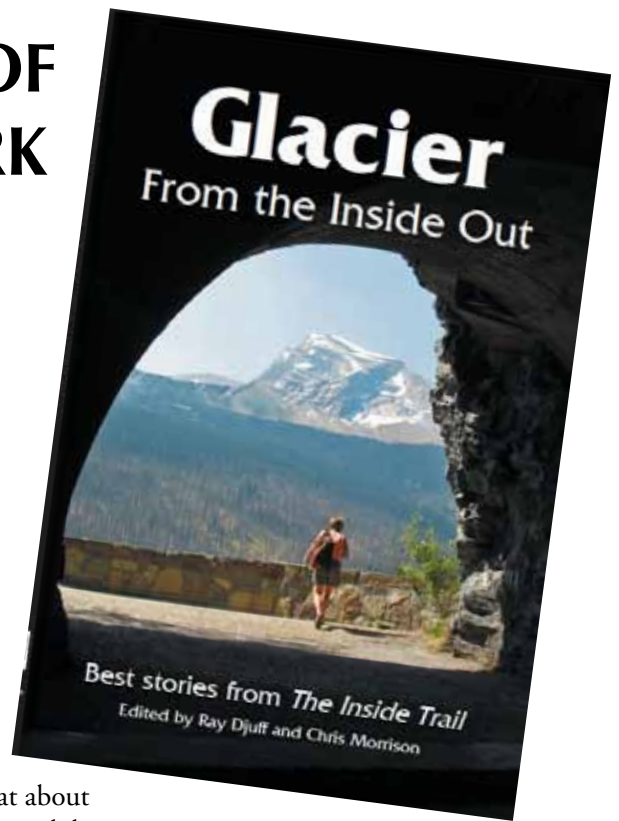
After a long time, a car came along. It stopped when they aggressively thumbed a ride. However, it was full of luggage, with room for only a single passenger. The driver invited Dave and one of his friends to climb onto the roof of the car. They lay down on the luggage rack, gripping the rail, with their feet dangling over the rear window. Then the driver set off down the dark road at a maniacal rate of speed. To learn what happened, read the book!

"*Midnight Cruise Aboard the DeSmet*" recalls an ill-considered employee party. Patrick Singer (1959) recalls that the entire hotel staff set off on the launch *DeSmet* in the middle of the night. They brought along the jazz band's equipment, including a piano, which husky employees lugged up the gangplank and installed on the upper deck. They went to a remote part of Lake McDonald, and the band began to play.

"Unfortunately," Patrick recalls, "none of us was aware of how sound travels over open water. We soon found out. By 12:45 a.m., everybody around the

lake was wide awake and expressing their displeasure to the Park Service." A ranger with a bullhorn hailed the *DeSmet* and ordered it off the lake. At the dock, the employees were greeted by a small army of rangers and by their manager, all in an indignant state. To find out what happened, read the book!

"*Rumble at the Entrance Lodge*" describes a "High Noon" situation at Glacier Park Lodge in the late 1940s. A crowd of roughnecks from the Montana oilfields came to the lodge for an afternoon of music and beer. By evening, they were looking for trouble, and were defiant when asked to leave. Bill Treacy (1946-49) recalls the tension as "all available forces of Glacier Park male employees were called from their dorms." A riot was imminent, and an excited house detective was waving a gun. But cooler heads were present among combat veterans of World War II. To find out what happened, read the book!



# MANY MIMES

By Dan Manka (*Many Glacier 1975*)

In 1975, two young men who worked with me at Many Glacier Hotel were pantomime artists. Their names were Joel Swandby and Harvey Barkowski. One evening, they put on a performance of ten mime skits in the lobby of the hotel.

It was arranged that I would make large poster board placards with the titles of each of the skits. A young lady from the hotel staff would hold up one of my placards and walk across in front of the audience so that everyone could read the one, two, or three-word title of the upcoming skit. She then would walk back across the front and place the placard on an easel for all to view.

It was a challenge for me to use different styles of lettering for each placard. Many of the titles appeared to be on a piece of parchment with the irregular edges burned. All of this was done with special art pens and with black or gold ink.

One skit was entitled “Nailed.” (I made it look as if the word was on

a separate page and was nailed with four nails to the more solid placard. One young mime artist came out and sat nervously alone. He soon started

Probably these two young men did the now famous “Bubblegum Skit.” One mime was chewing gum in a park and took it out of his mouth

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*One evening, they put on a performance of ten mime skits in the lobby of the hotel.*

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to bite off all his fingernails. This job finished, another mime came in looking proudly at his own long fingernails. The first mime began coveting the other fingernails. In the end, he tackled the other mime artist in order to bite off more fingernails.

Another skit was entitled “The Heist.” One mime went through a whole story of sneaking into a bank or museum to steal a large diamond like the Hope Diamond. I remember he looked left and right and then the artist did a wonderful job of pretending to climb a tall ladder while standing in one place on the floor. Then just as he was about to get caught, the artist put his head down and closed his eyes, thus indicating the end of the skit.

to stick it under the park bench. In turn, others come onto the scene and do various things with the gum, including throwing it, playing with it, getting it stuck in one’s hair, and getting one’s foot stuck to the ground with it. Finally, the first mime returns to the park bench and remembers his gum and where he left it. The last sequence shows him popping his old, dirty gum back in his mouth.

There were many other skits, but these are the ones that I can remember over a third of a century later. The mime artists were excellent. They were my mentors for teaching my speech students how to do pantomimes and gestures. My compliments.

## 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)

