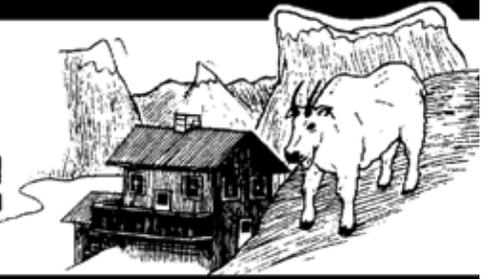
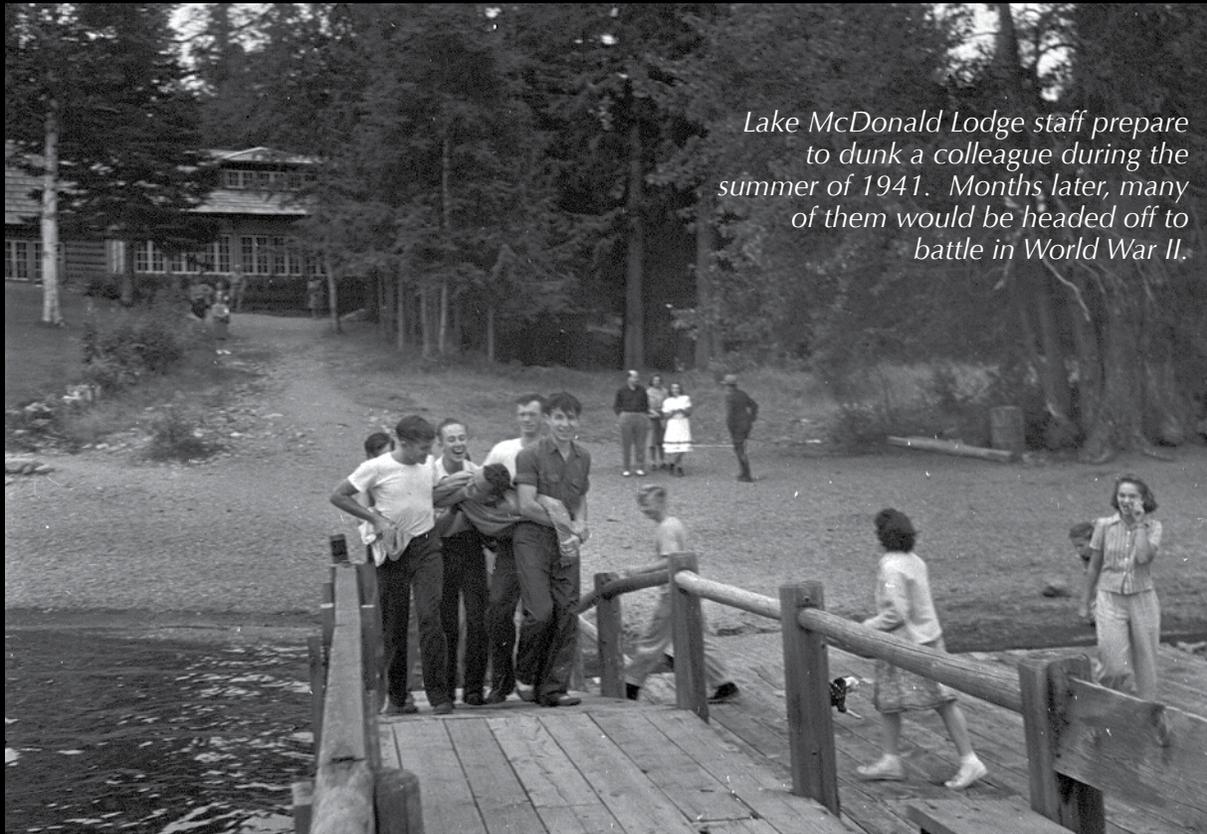


# THE INSIDE TRAIL



Voice of the Glacier Park Foundation  Summer 2014  Volume XXIX, No. 2

## 100 Years at Lake McDonald Lodge



*Lake McDonald Lodge staff prepare to dunk a colleague during the summer of 1941. Months later, many of them would be headed off to battle in World War II.*

*(photo by Bonham Cross, courtesy of the Glacier National Park archives.)*

*In this issue:*

• *Through the Years at Lake McDonald Lodge* • *Great Characters of the Early Years at McD* • *Tales from the '40s, '50s and '70s.* • *Making Music in Glacier* • *Piegans in Portland* • *A Summer with Ian Tippet* • *"Glacier Cup" Soccer* • *Inside News of Glacier Park*

# A Centennial Salute to Lake McD

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

No sight in Glacier Park is more peaceful than the forest that borders the road on the east side of Lake McDonald. The trees are lofty and lush and luxuriant, woven densely as hedge. They have an air of romance and mystery that puts one in mind of legendary forests like Sherwood or Fangorn.

The forest is at its most romantic on a misty and cloudy day. Fog rolls dramatically for hundreds of feet up the slopes above the road. The mountains tower up into the clouds, suggesting Himalayan heights. The green shades of the forest are especially vivid and striking against the grey sky.

You turn into a corridor in the forest, and under the eaves of the trees you catch the first glimpse of Lake

McDonald Lodge. It has an air of peaceful tranquility. Stately cedars overshadow it, and hanging baskets of flowers charmingly accent its chocolate brown walls. Where the larger lodges on Glacier's east side have an atmosphere of drama, this lodge has an atmosphere of peace.

That sense of peace becomes stronger still as you enter the lobby of the lodge. It's agreeably dusky. The front desk and information desk are on a small scale, and the fireplace around which everything focuses gives the lobby a homey air.

You step out the western doorway, and there again you find a profound sense of peace. Vivid flowers surround the veranda, and long stone stairs descend to Lake McDonald, as tranquil as the Sea of Galilee. The launch *DeSmet* is picturesquely moored in the blue-green water. Just

to your left, Snyder Creek tumbles down beside the lodge into the lake.

Many of us enjoyed these agreeable sights on June 14, 2014, which marked the centennial of the lodge. Some 200 people filled the auditorium building across the creek for the centennial celebration. The auditorium's roughhewn décor (comprised entirely of old cedar bark) was appropriate for the event.

A driving rain was falling outside as the celebration got underway. Guests and speakers were peeling off streaming raingear. Emcee Marc Ducharme, the general manager of the concession, praised the old building's watertight character.

Jeff Mow, the recently appointed superintendent of Glacier Park, provided opening remarks. He described stopping in for a haircut that morning and finding that everyone in the barbershop had a story of Glacier Park. He remarked that "the National Parks are about the experi-

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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.*

ences people have,” thanked those who have cared for Glacier’s facilities, and stressed the importance of private groups working in partnership with the Park Service as federal budgets decline.

Mark Priess, executive director of the Glacier Conservancy (Glacier’s chief philanthropic private partner) made further remarks on these same themes. He said that the Park experience would be diminished without the historic buildings. He stressed the importance of preserving them and the stories that they embody.

Glacier Park Foundation directors Ray Djuff and Mark Hufstetler then gave the principal talks at the event. Both are noted Glacier Park historians, and we are honored to publish adaptations of their talks in this issue of *The Inside Trail*. Ray described the lodge’s early history, while Mark gave a personal account of life there in more recent years.

Another personal reflection then was given by Rob Lucke. He has a lifelong connection with Lake McDonald Lodge and was a gearjammer in the Park for many years. He shared colorful memories of childhood (“Charlie Russell was always a hero for Montana kids like me; we’d choose to play him when we were children;” “I used to wander the lobby here, and I couldn’t figure out where the smoke went, because there’s a window above the fireplace”).

Lucke related how Kirtland Cutter, the lodge’s original architect, had a custom of starting the first fire in the fireplace of buildings that he designed. Cutter did so at Lake McDonald on June 14, 1914. A colorful first-fire-lighting tradition is still maintained at the lodge today.

Lucke explained that on the last day of each season, bellmen take a flaming log from the fire. They run it down to the boat dock and throw it

into the lake, after which they jump into the water fully clothed – and other employees jump in, and some guests do! The log is retrieved and used as the first log in the fireplace the following year.

Lucke then concluded by reciting a pledge composed for the event. He declared that Lake McDonald has “the best food, the best lodging, the best forest, the best employees – we are blessed to have this situation, and we dedicate ourselves to be zealous stewards for its preservation.”

Also present for the event was Ian Tippet, manager of the lodge from 1957 to 1960, and personnel director for the lodges from 1961 to 1996. He greeted numerous employees whom he had hired through the decades, including current manager Todd Ashcraft. The centennial united generations of lodge employees, Park staff and friends of Glacier Park.

*(photo courtesy of Mark Hufstetler.)*

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*No sight in Glacier Park is more peaceful than the forest that borders the road on the east side of Lake McDonald.*

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# Inside News of the Summer in Glacier Park

## Heroism and Tragedy

Bystanders heroically plunged into McDonald Creek in two emergency situations early this summer, when the water was swift and high. On July 12, Abigail Sylvester, 37, fell into the creek while taking photos. Her husband jumped in but could not reach her. Sylvester was carried over Lower McDonald Falls, where a father and son plunged in, swam to her and pulled her ashore. They applied CPR with the aid of park rangers, but were unable to save her life. Three days later, a 12-year-old boy fell into the creek above the falls and was pulled ashore by a heroic stranger.

the championship trophy, which is proudly displayed in the lobby.

The competition was renewed this summer, with a game every Friday evening. Eiland served as referee. Large groups of off-duty employees attended from the other lodges (often displaying creative signs) to support their teams. The teams were highly international, reflecting the world-wide recruitment of employees by Glacier Park, Inc. and by Xanterra. GPL's squad for 2014 again included Sefa and Lyuben, with teammates from many other nations (*see photo on page 24*).

worked with him at Many Glacier Hotel, where he produced Broadway musicals from 1961 through 1983.

Mr. Tippet stated that he has worked in Glacier for 63 years, which drew great applause. He then announced to the stunned audience that he will leave GPI after this season. He is considering employment offers from five-star hotels in London for next year. He was given thunderous applause at the end of his speech. After the program, dozens of people came up to visit, talk, and take pictures with Mr. Tippet, and everyone was given birthday cake.

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*In early July, Glacier Park, Inc. completed the purchase of the West Glacier Mercantile Company from the Lundgren family, complementing GPI's existing operations in and around Glacier National Park.*

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## "Glacier Cup" Soccer

As soccer's World Cup drew attention this summer, Glacier's lodges enjoyed a spirited competition. Games were played weekly on the luxuriant front lawn at Glacier Park Lodge.

The soccer rivalry began in 2013. Two employees at Glacier Park Lodge (Sefa, from Turkey, and Lyuben, from Bulgaria) asked manager Kathy Eiland's permission to recruit a team and challenge the other lodges. Eiland contacted the managers at Many Glacier, Lake McDonald, and St. Mary. All were enthused about the proposal. The maintenance crew constructed goals, and games were played weekly on the lawn. A tournament was played at the end of August. GPL won

An end-of-summer tournament again was held among the four lodges. Glacier Park Lodge defeated Many Glacier 11-4 in the championship match, and will keep the "Glacier Cup" for another year.

## Ian Tippet's Birthday

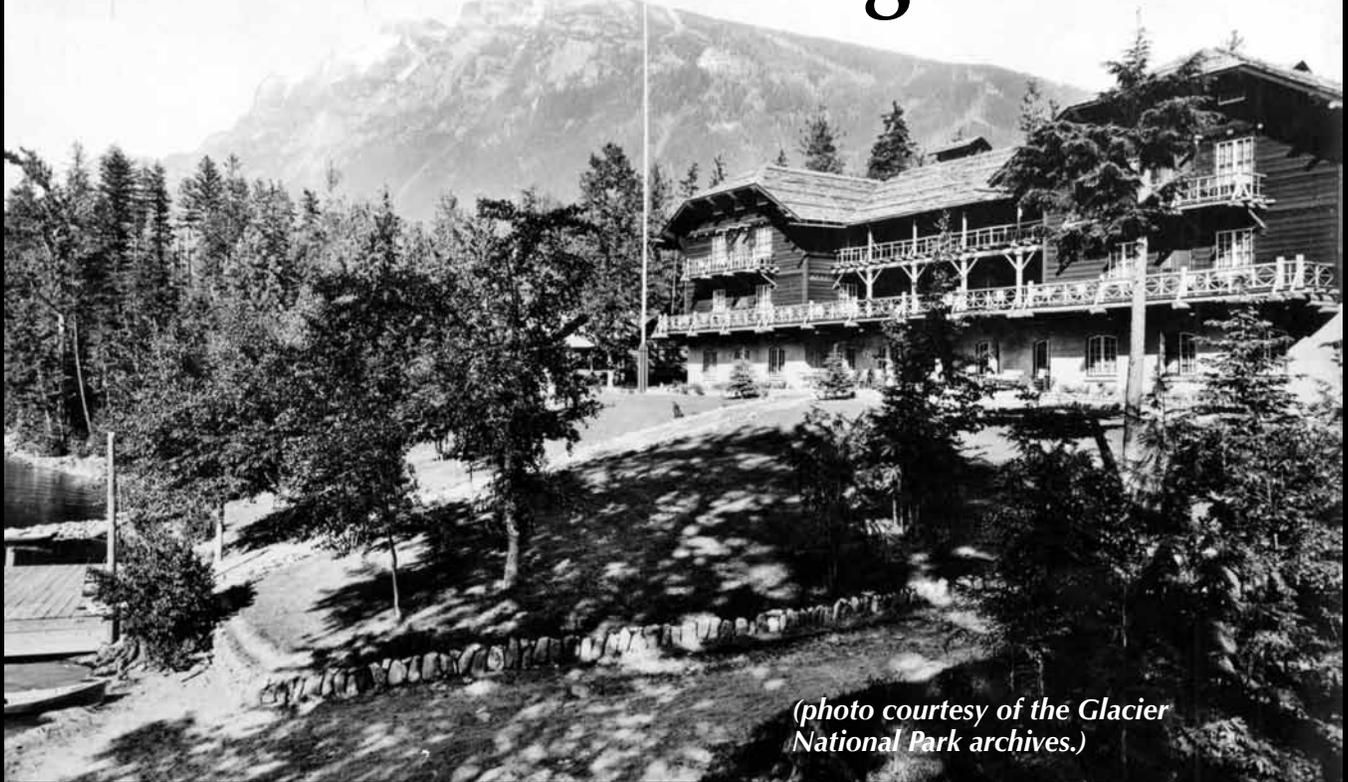
July 27, 2014, was Ian Tippet's 84th birthday. Mike Rihner, the entertainment director at Glacier Park Lodge, honored Mr. Tippet and invited him to speak at that evening's lobby performance. Mr. Tippet recalled his first summer with the Glacier Park Hotel Co. in 1950. He described years of work at virtually every location in the park, and his hiring (as personnel director for Glacier Park, Inc.) of many thousands of employees. Among them were music and drama majors who

Mike Rihner's reflection echoes the sentiments of thousands of Glacier employees: "From the bottom of my heart, I thank you so very much, Mr. Tippet, for without you, there would be no me. The opportunity you gave to me when you offered the chance to come to work for you in Glacier Park shaped my life in immeasurable ways. That opportunity has helped make me the person I am today in virtually every positive way imaginable. You always led by example, as your dedicated and incredible work ethic has inspired and still continues to inspire me to this very day. Your intense dedication to service, honor, loyalty, humor, grace, and profoundly noble character are traits that we all aspire to have in some degree, and you have always possessed those traits in great abundance. Thank you again, Mr. Tippet, thank you so very much. It has been an honor to work with you, to laugh with you, to make music with you, to be inspired by you, and perhaps most importantly, to call you a friend. Cheerio, dear friend, and

*(Continued on page 23)*

## *Through the Years at*

# Lake McDonald Lodge



*(photo courtesy of the Glacier National Park archives.)*

*By Mark Hufstetler (Lake McDonald 1978-83)*

On June 14, 2014, Glacier Park officially marked the centennial of Lake McDonald Lodge, the cozy and inviting hostelry that has long been the hub of visitor life on the park's west side. The lodge is a charming place, with a unique history very different from that of the better-known Glacier hotels east of the Divide. Unlike the railway-built lodgings elsewhere in the park, the buildings at Lake McDonald reflect the legacies of pioneer homesteaders and individual entrepreneurs – and reveal a story that even predates the creation of the park itself. And though the lodge building itself just turned 100, the location has now hosted summer visitors for close to 120

years. As such, it is easily the oldest of Glacier's park concessions.

The Lake McDonald area first became a tourist destination in the early 1890s, after the Great Northern Railway (GN) built into northwestern Montana in 1891. The railroad's completion helped draw homesteaders into the area, several of whom settled along the shore of the lake. The land they chose wasn't at all suited for farming, but the homesteaders were well aware of their spectacular location, and before long

several of them went into the tourist business. As the decade progressed, a series of cabin camps and other visitor services began appearing along Lake McDonald's shore, both at the present site of Apgar and near the head of the lake. The latter locations were only accessible by boat.

One of these early hostelries was at the present site of Lake McDonald Lodge, and was hosting visitors by at least 1895. A local settler named George Snyder operated the property during its first years, building a

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## ***Through the Years at McD (continued)***

small, two-story wood-frame hotel at the site. Snyder's property was inaccessible by road, and so Snyder purchased a 40-foot steamboat and began a launch service from Apgar to the head of the lake. In those early years, visitors heading to the new Snyder Hotel were obliged to walk a quarter of a mile from the train station at Belton to the Middle Fork of the Flathead River where they were taken across in a rowboat. On the opposite bank, a buckboard service carried them to Apgar where they boarded the steamship to the head of Lake McDonald.

Other hotels and guest services soon began appearing nearby. In 1896, Denny Comeau and Ernest Christensen began taking saddle horse parties on trips into the backcountry near the head of Lake McDonald. Frank Geduhn, another local entrepreneur, built a resort near the McDonald Creek inlet in 1899 and a log hotel a year later. In 1906 Frank Kelly launched a gas-powered boat to bring visitors to the head of the lake. Kelly also owned a number of guest cabins near the northern end of the lake, and his "Kelly's Camp" buildings still survive today.

The year 1906 also saw the arrival of John E. Lewis, a Flathead Valley businessman who was destined to transform the Lake McDonald Lodge site. Lewis purchased the Snyder Hotel property and its surrounding land, and soon began erecting a string of 11 guest cabins, constructed of cedar and larch, running along the shoreline to the north. (Several of these remain in use today.) By 1910, when the U.S. Congress made Glacier a National Park, Lewis was the most prominent

hotel proprietor in the area.

The formal establishment of Glacier National Park brought still more attention to the beauty of the Lake McDonald region, and the number of travelers to the area continued to slowly climb. A record 5,500 visitors traveled to the lake in the summer of 1913, a number that was destined only to grow, and Lewis realized that it was time to transform his rustic hotel. Determined not to be outdone by the Great Northern Railway, which was rapidly expanding its Glacier visitor services, Lewis began planning the construction of an entirely new hotel that would truly be "something worthy of the park."

Lewis enlisted the noted regional architect Kirkland Cutter to design his new building, and construction commenced that November. Fixtures, furnishings, and other materials were freighted across the ice of Lake McDonald during the winter months and carried by boat in the spring. The three-story chalet-style hotel, which featured steam heat, electric lights, and running water, contained 64 guest rooms (with 20 additional rooms in the adjacent cabins). The first floor featured an elegant lobby and eight two-room guest suites; the adjacent dining room was housed in a rustic log wing that had been constructed three years earlier. Guests arrived at the hotel by boat, climbing a long set of steps that led from the dock, and passing under a lakeside balcony to the main entrance. No expense was spared in providing visitors with first-class accommodations and ambiance, although Lewis also made sure that his long-time friends and acquaintances from the Flathead Valley were made

welcome. The new "Lewis Glacier Hotel" opened to the public on June 15, 1914.

In addition to the hotel and cabin facilities, Lewis oversaw the construction of a number of other buildings at Lake McDonald, providing housing for employees, special services for guests and other auxiliary functions. All shared a straightforward, rustic design that blended in well with the primeval forest setting. A small barbershop building appeared in 1909. Snyder Hall, a two-story log building, was built in 1911 as a public assembly room with a stone fireplace and seven upstairs bedrooms. A large commercial laundry, a steam plant, and a hydroelectric facility were constructed along Snyder Creek in the late 1910s. Other buildings added to the site included a caretaker's house (1922), the "Garden Court" employee dormitory (1927), and a soda fountain/dance hall building (also 1927). Lewis also built a handsome home at the site for himself and his wife Olive – a building later known as "Cobb Cabin," for the author Irvin S. Cobb, who stayed in the house for a time.

The Lewis Glacier Hotel flourished through the 1920s. Glacier's Superintendent Ross Eakin called the property "one of the most popular hotels in the country," and it was often filled to capacity. A major factor in the hotel's success was the ongoing construction of the Going-to-the-Sun Road, which was opened as far as the hotel in 1921. This ease of access drew an ever-increasing number of visitors to the park's west side, a number that grew even more after the road was completed from Lake McDonald to Logan Pass in 1929.

## *Through the Years at McD (continued)*

The arrival of the automobile greatly changed the character of Lewis' hotel, and of the visitor experience there. Until 1921, the lakeside door was the building's main entry, and the doors on the opposite side led to a vegetable garden, a pasture and horse corrals, and then the wilderness. The construction of the Sun Road nearly reversed the landscape; roads and parking lots gradually filled the old pasture area, and the trailheads and stables were moved farther away. To absorb the feeling of the wilderness, visitors now headed out the former front doors to escape the automobiles and relax on the shore of the lake.

Lewis continued operating his Glacier Hotel through the 1920s, though his enthusiasm for the

the hotel complex became federal property, and the business was incorporated into the Glacier Park Hotel Company's larger concession. The Lewis Glacier Hotel became the Lake McDonald Hotel, the newest addition to the Great Northern Railway's portfolio of Glacier Park lodgings.

Under its new ownership and management, the hotel and its grounds saw a series of gradual changes during the 1930s. The Sun Road was rebuilt to slightly bypass the hotel area in 1936-37, creating the alignment that remains in use today and adding the handsome stone bridges across Snyder Creek. Associated projects saw the construction of the circular drive that now marks the hotel's southern entrance, as well as the long parking boulevards

was closed during the World War II years, but the property was back in full operation by 1946. Things were little changed for the next decade, though the hotel received a bit more local competition in 1955, with the opening of Frank Stuart's "Motel Lake McDonald" on an inholder tract just behind the campstore. (Other privately-owned lodging facilities also operated for years on inholdings farther east, some until the late 1970s.) The mid-1950s also saw a major fire at the hotel laundry, which resulted in its closure and later conversion into an employee dorm. Cobb Cabin and the old hydro-electric plant also became employee housing, and the barbershop became a nurse's station.

Meanwhile, the Park Service began to talk more and more openly about the prospect of replacing the Lake McDonald hotel altogether, in large part because the agency felt that it didn't best meet the needs of the era's automobile-based travelers. The park had been pushing for more motel and cabin-type accommodations in Glacier since the 1930s, an effort that resulted in the construction of new facilities at Swiftcurrent and Rising Sun, and the closure of the grand old chalet complex at Sun Point. Plans for a replacement motel complex at Apgar were considered, but the Great Northern resisted the proposal and it was ultimately dropped.

Instead, Lake McDonald and the other concessionaire properties underwent a late-1950s refurbishment underwritten by the Great Northern Railway. The GN in 1956 contracted with the Knutson Corporation of Minneapolis to refurbish its Gla-

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*The lodge is a charming place, with a unique history very different from that of the better-known Glacier hotels east of the Divide.*

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venture had faded by the end of the decade. The massive 1929 Half Moon forest fire in the Apgar area destroyed much of the lovely cedar-hemlock forest at the foot of the lake, and perhaps reminded Lewis of the fragility of the hotel's setting. At the same time, continually increasing tourist numbers prompted the Park Service to pressure Lewis to expand his operation, a project that Lewis felt he could ill afford. When the Park Service and the Great Northern Railway's Glacier Park Hotel Company proposed the construction of a competing hotel on adjacent federal land, Lewis felt that he had no choice but to sell. Through a series of financial transactions in 1930 and 1932,

connecting the hotel area to the main road. The Glacier Park Hotel Company completed the location's new campstore building in 1938, a facility that served both as a stopover point for auto travelers and a grocery store for the seasonal residents who maintained summer homes near the lakeshore. The campstore also housed the Lake McDonald post office for many years. In the hotel itself, private bathrooms were finally added to a number of the guest rooms. At the end of the decade, the hotel and cabins offered a total of 72 rooms, with space to accommodate approximately 135 overnight guests.

Along with most of Glacier's guest facilities, Lake McDonald Hotel

## ***Through the Years at McD (continued)***

cier facilities, partly to appease the Park Service and partly to make the properties seem more appealing to potential buyers. Improvements to the Lake McDonald Hotel included the addition of a cocktail lounge and gift shop in 1958; reconfiguration of the first floor office and bathroom facilities; and the construction of a new front desk. The hotel was also renamed “Lake McDonald Lodge,” a term that was felt to be more contemporary and inviting.

As the railway completed the refurbishment of its Glacier properties, it began to more actively search for a buyer for the concession, and the business was finally sold in January 1961 to an Arizona capitalist named Don Hummel, who had also owned concession facilities in Lassen and Mt. McKinley National Parks. Hummel began operating Lake McDonald and the other Glacier concessions that summer, under the name Glacier Park Incorporated.

During Hummel’s 20-year tenure in the Park, a number of changes took place at the Lodge complex. Snyder Hall became an employee dormitory, and the soda fountain and dance hall were modified to serve as an employee recreation facility and public auditorium. A gas station was built near the campstore in 1962. In 1966, Hummel privately purchased the Lake McDonald Motel from the Stuart family, and began operating it as part of the lodge property. Still more employee housing was added in 1968, when ten guest cabins from the Swiftcurrent auto camp were trucked to Lake McDonald and converted to dormitory space.

Torrential rains fell in the Park in early June 1964, causing disastrous

flooding on both the east and west sides of the Continental Divide. At Lake McDonald Lodge, Snyder Creek flooded its banks and Lake McDonald rose significantly as up to eight inches of precipitation fell on the southern portions of the Park. The flooding damaged portions of the lodge dining room and the grill in the employee recreation hall. Probably in response to the flood damage, a new coffee shop building and associated parking lot were constructed at Lake McDonald the following year, on a prominent location near the east end of the complex. In contrast to the earlier buildings at the site, the coffee shop displayed contemporary architectural lines that, to some eyes, conflicted with its environment.

The concession operation changed hands again in 1981, when Glacier Park, Inc. was acquired by a corporate predecessor of the Viad Corporation. In 1988-89, the Park Service undertook a \$1.2 million renovation of Lake McDonald Lodge, restoring the lobby to its original flavor and general historic configuration. A to-

Changes at the lodge during the first years of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century focused heavily on employee housing. A large new employee dormitory and cafeteria complex was developed behind the existing coffee shop, using new buildings that were suggestive of the chalet-style architecture that had characterized the park for a century. The historic old Hydro and Johnson dorms were razed in favor of additional parking, while the Snyder and Cobb buildings were transformed into additional visitor lodgings. And the summer of 2013 brought the promise of still other changes to come, as the Park Service announced that the Glacier concession contract would be given to the Xanterra corporation. (The Motel Lake McDonald property, however, remains a part of GPI.)

Today, Lake McDonald Lodge enjoys full bookings virtually throughout its season of operation. Visitors, in the same fashion as their predecessors in 1914, enjoy its lovely grounds and setting along the shore of Lake McDonald, eat in its log dining room, and gaze up at the summit

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*Unlike the railway-built lodgings elsewhere in the park, the buildings at Lake McDonald reflect the legacies of pioneer homesteaders and individual entrepreneurs – and reveal a story that even predates the creation of the park itself.*

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tem pole was erected near the lodge’s vehicle-side entrance, commemorating a similar pole that once stood by the lakeside façade. Other improvements included the restoration of the lobby fireplace, and massive changes to the landscaping surrounding the building.

of Mount Brown, more than a mile above them. And, like the first guests that arrived at the Lodge via George Snyder’s steamship, they can catch a glimpse of its lakeside entrance from the deck of the *DeSmet* and imagine arriving at the Lewis Glacier Hotel at the beginning of the last century.

# Great Characters of the Early Years at Lake McD



Charlie Russell, Irwin Cobb and John Lewis at Lake McDonald Lodge, 1920s

(photo courtesy of Great Northern records, Minnesota Historical Society)

By Ray Djuff (*Prince of Wales* 1973-75, '78)

Lake McDonald Lodge is hallowed ground. This site, more than any other – I would argue – is the birthplace of tourism in what is now Glacier National Park. And the lodge, whose centennial we celebrated June 14, is the ultimate manifestation of those early efforts.

In this essay I'd like to look at some of the key players – characters, I should probably say – whose efforts laid the groundwork for the hotel and who were responsible for its initial success.

The moment in 1891 when construction crews for the Great Northern Railway punched their way eastward, laying lines through Marias Pass toward Columbia Falls, Kalispell, Whitefish and beyond, interest in Lake

McDonald spiked. The easy access railway service offered opened this tranquil region to settlers. Among the pioneers who flocked to the shores of the lake are such familiar names as Milo Apgar, Frank Kelly, Denny Comeau, Charlie Howe and Frank Gedhun – interestingly, all of whom saw more opportunity in tourism than homesteading.

Tourism was a natural fit. Lake McDonald is almost 10 miles long and a little over a mile wide. It's flanked by Howe Ridge to the west and Snyder Ridge to the east, with mountain peaks beyond rising 4,000 to 5,000 feet above lake level. Many of the

mountains are easily climbed and if you're not the vigorous, outdoors type, easy on the eye.

Due to the prevailing Pacific winds and the nearby Continental Divide, precipitation can be heavy and the landscape lush, much of it covered in those early days by cedar trees. In the lake, salmon, trout and whitefish were abundant. Lake McDonald soon became a place to visit, hike, boat and fish, or just rest, taking in the sunshine while relaxing among the fragrant cedars.

Among those early pioneers to set up a tourism business was George Snyder.

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*Lake McDonald Lodge is hallowed ground. This site, more than any other . . . is the birthplace of tourism in what is now Glacier National Park.*

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## Great Characters (continued)

Snyder was just 23 when he showed up on the shores of Lake McDonald in 1894. While we know some of his background, other aspects are vague – such as why the Wisconsin-born Snyder was in Montana at all. Acquaintance and artist Ace Powell said he thought Snyder was a remittance man, given that Snyder had been married and quickly divorced, both little more than a year prior to his arrival. Maybe Snyder left the bosom of his family and came west in shame. We may never know.

What Snyder found in Montana was a new beginning, claiming land on a large, flat parcel on the east shore of Lake McDonald, eventually building a two-storey frame hotel to cater to tourists, the Hotel Glacier. But how to get the tourists to the hotel? Snyder acquired a 40-foot steamer and had the boat transported overland to the lake. Snyder was no fool – he promptly named the vessel the *F.I. Whitney*, after the Great Northern passenger traffic manager who could direct so much business his way.

Whitney was known as an unabashed promoter. A newspaper report said Whitney “seems to have but one purpose in life and it is to build up and develop the great Northwest. How many hours a day he works no one knows, but it is far more than the labor unions demand for the day laborer.”

Snyder’s hotel was no palace. An article in the *St. Paul Globe* newspaper described it as “a plain but comfortable stopping place . . . a good starting place for parties going into the mountains.” But to go where, exactly, as there were few if any developed trails in the mountains other than those created by animals?

One of Snyder’s hotel guests, Lyman Sperry, a professor from Oberlin College in Ohio, would “discover” two of the most popular destinations and help create the trails to get there. Prof. Sperry was certain a source of Lake McDonald’s water was a glacier and in his attempts to find it stumbled first upon what we now call the “Trail of the Cedars” and, at its end, Avalanche Lake. Then, meandering up the Sprague

Creek basin, Sperry found what he had been searching for: the glacier that now bears his name.

With the Great Northern’s passenger traffic manager Whitney promoting Lake McDonald, Snyder’s place, variously referred to as Hotel Glacier or the Glacier Hotel, became a popular spot, and more buildings were added.

Apparently comfortable with his success, Snyder tried marriage again, but like his first attempt the love didn’t last and four years later it was over. Legend has it that Snyder lost the hotel in a high-stakes poker game, but I think otherwise. In May 1906 Snyder’s wife Ida divorced him. I believe he was despondent over his failed marriage and later that year sold the hotel and more than 280 acres to try to put the heartache behind him.

The buyer was Olive Lewis, the wife of Columbia Falls businessman and lawyer John Lewis. The Iowa-born John Lewis came west to play professional baseball in Helena and never left Montana. He dabbled in numerous business activities, from the fur

*Hays foresaw business increasing at the hotel and wanted in early. So he quietly commissioned Kalispell boat builder William Swanson to create the Motor Vessel De Smet. The boat made its debut on Lake McDonald in the summer of 1930.*



*(photo courtesy of the Glacier National Park archives)*

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*We can thank George Snyder for the initial concept and location, John and Olive Lewis for the traditions of hospitality and early start on Sun Road, architect Kirtland Cutter for the building design, Charlie Russell and friends for the entertainment, and Howard Hays for the De Smet and the Red buses. It is a rich legacy that has grown each year, thanks to dedicated staff and management.*

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## **Great Characters (continued)**

trade to hotels, such as the Gaylord in Columbia Falls. He was gregarious and involved with many groups, including the Masonic Lodge, Kiwanis Club, Elks and Odd Fellows. Olive was equally social, given to entertaining and rallying her acquaintances to various community activities.

John and Olive Lewis took Snyder's hotel operation to a new level. Almost immediately Olive Lewis revamped the main floor of the Hotel Glacier to give it a more modern, elegant look. Olive and John also started throwing parties to which all the summer residents around the lake were invited, as well as shindigs for their social and business acquaintances in Columbia Falls, Kalispell and Whitefish. Word soon spread about these parties. During an inspection in 1910, the sheriff determined that Lewis "had been a little too hospitable . . . and had been furnishing visitors liquor . . . without the necessary license." Not to worry. Lewis, with his legal background and political connections, had the issue sorted out in no time.

Business was soon booming and the Lewises were on a roll. They added more cabins to the north of the hotel to handle the increased tourism traffic and when the Glacier region became a national park in 1910, John Lewis pondered a major expansion to accommodate an expected influx of even more tourists. A December 1910 newspaper story said the "plans for the

hotel are being prepared by architect [Marion] B. Rizzo of [Kalispell]. . . . A striking feature of the plan will be an immense circular lobby, with heavy cedar columns, great fireplaces, lofty ceilings heavily beamed with wide openings leading to the verandas, the dining rooms, [and a] pergola running to a large summer house further up the hill." Lewis was thinking big.

John and Olive Lewis held off on that plan, though, and watched for two years as the Great Northern Railway pushed ahead with its developments, especially construction of Glacier Park Lodge and a series of chalet and tent camps, each spread roughly a day's ride apart throughout Glacier. For the most part all these facilities were east of the Continental Divide, which bisects the park, but two of the camps were west of the Divide.

One, Sperry Camp, was just six miles up the mountain from Lewis's hotel and on the route to Sperry Glacier. No longer did Lewis have a monopoly on the glacier. Tourists could arrive at West Glacier and stay at the railway's Belton Chalets, take a boat to Lewis's hotel, and then ride a horse or hike to the Great Northern's Sperry Camp, from where they could scramble to the glacier. As well, the tourists didn't have to return to Lewis's hotel, but could continue on to other Great Northern facilities.

When the Great Northern started talking about a permanent structure

at Sperry to replace the tent camp, the Lewises could see the writing on the wall. Determined not to be left behind, in 1912 John and Olive Lewis commissioned Kirtland Cutter – of the Spokane architectural firm Cutter and Malmgren – to design a hotel that would be smaller, but equal, to what the Great Northern was doing elsewhere in the park.

Cutter came with a strong regional reputation. Not only had he designed the Conrad Mansion in Kalispell, the Glover Mansion in Spokane and Rainier Club in Seattle, he penned designs suited for rural settings, such as North Point for Lucy Carnegie (yes, those Carnegies) and the Idaho Building at the 1893 World Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Cutter had previously submitted a design to the Great Northern for the Belton Chalet in 1909, and later was sought by the railway to draw up plans for Many Glacier Hotel, although in the end the railway used its own man for the final design at Many Glacier.

The result of Cutter's effort, and \$64,000 spent by the Lewises for construction and outfitting, is Lake McDonald Lodge.

The *Columbian* newspaper said the new hotel "not only equals the beautiful [East Glacier] structure in every way, but it goes about it one point better. . . . The Lewis Hotel stands out from its rival by virtue of the fact

## Great Characters (continued)



George Snyder, Howard Hays

that a lady attended to the buying and installation of the furnishings. Mrs. Lewis has selected with a lavish hand and artistic taste and given to the place an air of hominess and cheeriness that man fails to give in such work.”

The Lewises knew that to survive and thrive they'd have to do more than just offer a comfortable lodging. Realizing the importance of the automobile to the changing American way of life, Lewis shelled out money to build 3.5 miles of road along the eastern side of Lake McDonald from Apgar. It was a first step in the construction of what would become Sun Road, which by 1922 was completed to his doorstep. The arrival of the first auto tourists was reason for a party and the Lewises had just the place for it: a recreation hall added to the complex in 1911. It's now called Snyder Hall.

“There will be a big dance Saturday night, the music by a special orchestra,” the local newspaper reported. “This will be one of the biggest community gatherings of the season.”

What made such gatherings special beyond just the occasion was the possibility of distinguished guests attending, with none other than cowboy artist Charlie Russell and his wife Nancy as regular hotel visitors. The Russells

had a summer place on the lake called Bull Head Lodge and Charlie relished the mountain retreat where he could undertake new painting or finish incomplete ones. “It's about as wild a place as you can find these days,” Russell wrote, “and that is what I like.”

The Russell home attracted other artists, and was frequented by the likes of Olaf C. Seltzer, Joe De Yong, Maynard Dixon, Charlie Beil, Philip Goodwin and Ralph DeCamp. They would sometimes tag along when Nancy and Charlie went a' calling on the Lewises. It could make for a very distinguished guest list when the Russells showed up at the Hotel Glacier.

Local legend says that Lewis and Russell were such fast friends that Russell was invited to draw the designs on the lobby fireplace here as it was being built, but I've found no evidence to back up that claim. The blueprints for the hotel show pictographic drawings surrounding the fireplace. There are similar designs on the fireplace at Russell's Bull Head Lodge, which I think sparked the story Russell was somehow involved.

Other high profile guests at parties the Lewises threw could include Senator Burton Wheeler and his wife Lulu, who had a cabin on the lake, and Sena-

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*The spirit of this great hotel remains much as it was in those early years, undaunted by the passage of time.*

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*(photos courtesy of Krys Peterson; Glacier National Park archives)*

tor Thomas Walsh, another summer resident. A Teddy Roosevelt Republican, Lewis wasn't above currying favor with Democrats who might help him.

How newspaper humor columnist and author Irvin Cobb was drawn to the Hotel Glacier is not clear to me, but he started coming after the First World War and was a regular for many years. You might describe Cobb as the David Letterman of his day. His writing was rich and detailed, first for newspapers, including the *New York Sun*, and, later, articles for *Saturday Evening Post*. His books were turned into movies, starting in 1921, with his Hollywood career reaching its peak with talkies in the 1930s. By then he was such a national celebrity he was picked to host the 1935 Academy Awards ceremony at which Shirley Temple was given a special Oscar. Cobb's Kentucky humor and knack for storytelling made him an engaging guest, who at one point was presented with a mounted “fur-bearing trout” during a banquet at the hotel. It no doubt sparked much good-natured banter from Cobb. If you're interested, the fish is on display at the Whitefish train station.

By the late 1920s the Lewises, now in their 60s, were looking to get out of the hotel business. Lewis had a lot

## Great Characters (continued)

of tire-kickers, but only one serious potential buyer: the Great Northern Railway. The National Park Service also wanted the place, to reduce the number of inholders, to use the park service's term, but it lacked the cash. By then the west side of Sun Road was nearly completed from West Glacier to Logan Pass and the railway could envision the day when the entire road would be done. With the resulting traffic, one railway official predicted the hotel will "do a big business."

It would be nice to say the sale to the Great Northern went smoothly, but that wasn't the case. To say the least, the negotiations were acrimonious. Lewis wanted \$350,000 for the hotel, while the railway countered with \$275,000. Over the next two years, it was a Mexican standoff between the Lewises and the railway, with neither side willing to budge and the negotiations turning ugly.

The railway warned John Lewis the federal government might try condemnation proceedings to obtain the property. In reaction, Lewis sought permission to build a hotel at Logan Pass, which was now accessible from his hotel. The park service shot down that idea, as the Great Northern had right of first refusal on the site. The railway countered that it might instead build a new hotel at the head of Lake McDonald by buying Denny Co-meau's property. So Lewis started bad-mouthing service at Sperry Chalets, telling customers to avoid the place. When business at Sperry took a hit, the railway threatened to remove all references to the Lewises' hotel from its literature, even at the expense of the railway's fellow concessioners, the Red bus and saddle horse companies.

The breaking point came in 1929. In January, the Lewises' Gaylord Hotel in

Columbia Falls burned to the ground. That summer, the Half Moon Bay forest fire destroyed many buildings near and around Apgar, including the beautiful cedar forest that so attracted tourists to the area. And in October, the stock markets crashed. While in 1929 no one knew the slump would be the beginning of the nearly decade-long Great Depression, John Lewis wasn't about to tempt fate, especially after being told the national economic situation might delay the completion of Sun Road for years.

In February 1930 the Lewises sold the hotel to the Dakota and Great Northern Township Company, a railway subsidiary which would hold it in trust until the Park Service had sufficient cash to take the hotel and land off its hands. By that point, 1932, the U.S. economy had so soured that the Great Northern was glad to have the money and only be leasing the property.

In the midst of all the to and fro of negotiations with the Lewises was Howard Hays, who had taken over the bus concession in Glacier starting in 1927. Hays was a newspaper publisher from Riverside, California, who had previously managed concessions in Yellowstone. The railway used Hays as a middleman in talks with the Lewises. Hays was new to the park and had no history of animosity with John and Olive. In fact, Hays and the Lewises got along well, and by 1929 Hays was running his buses from the hotel to

and from Logan Pass, as far as the road was completed on the west side.

Behind it all, though, Hays had his own agenda. He had bought the bus company expressly because he knew Sun Road would be a boon to local tourism. Hays foresaw business increasing at the hotel and wanted in early. So he quietly commissioned Kalispell boat builder William Swanson to create the *Motor Vessel De Smet*. The boat made its debut on Lake McDonald in the summer of 1930. The *De Smet* is now in the hands of the family of Art Burch, who deserves more mention than I can possibly devote in the space I have.

The Great Northern would make a few changes – switching the name to Lake McDonald Hotel, adding the boulevard from Sun Road, and building the General Store– but they are minor in the big scheme of things. The spirit of this great hotel remains much as it was in those early years, undaunted by the passage of time. We can thank George Snyder for the initial concept and location, John and Olive Lewis for the traditions of hospitality and early start on Sun Road, architect Kirtland Cutter for the building design, Charlie Russell and friends for the entertainment, and Howard Hays for the *De Smet* and the Red buses. It is a rich legacy that has grown each year, thanks to dedicated staff and management.

Here's looking forward to Lake McDonald Lodge's next 100 years.

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*The spirit of this great hotel remains much as it was in those early years, undaunted by the passage of time.*

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By Mark Hufstetler (*Lake McD, 1978-83*)

In the spring of 1940 a Minnesota college student named Bonham Cross packed up and headed to Montana for the summer, joining hundreds of other young men and women working at the famed hotels and chalets of Glacier National Park. Employed as a bellman at Lake McDonald Hotel, Bonham enjoyed a memorable summer in the mountains, and he returned the following season with his brother in tow. The pair had a great time with many adventures, and Bonham picked up the lifelong nickname “Wolf” thanks to his voracious appetite in the hotel’s employee cafeteria. (Robert, even a heavier eater, became known as the “Cub.”) That summer, Bonham also managed to attract the attention of a young soda fountain worker named Marie Swanberg, and the two were married in 1945.

Bonham was also a talented photographer, and brought his camera gear with him to Lake McDonald. During his seasons at the hotel, he created several dozen carefully composed photos of employee life at the hotel, an evocative record of what it was like to work in Glacier in the years before World War II. Processed as glass-plate lantern slides, a fading technology even in 1941, the collection of photos remained with him for the rest of his life.

As with many young men of his era, Bonham’s college career was interrupted by the advent of World War II. He joined the military and became a decorated Army pilot, flying B-25 missions over Italy. Returning to Minnesota after the war, he settled in the Twin Cities with Marie and began a career as a newspaper photographer. Afflicted by hearing loss caused in part by his B-25 days, he spent his later years as an active volunteer and an advocate for the hearing disabled.

Bonham Cross died in April 2008 at the age of 87, and the following year his family donated his lantern-slide photos of Lake McDonald to the Glacier National Park Archives. The images are a wonderful record of employee life in Glacier three-quarters of a century ago.

# Bonham Cross, *a Bellman-Photographer in '41*



*(photos by  
Bonham Cross,  
courtesy of the  
Glacier National  
Park archives.)*

*During his seasons at the hotel, he created several dozen carefully composed photos of employee life at the hotel, an evocative record of what it was like to work in Glacier in the years before World War II.*



*(photos by  
Bonham Cross,  
courtesy of the  
Glacier National  
Park archives.)*



## The Summer of '52 at Lake McD

*By Carol Lindsay (Lake McDonald 1952)*

I remember how it began – a call for me in the hall of our freshman dorm in Moorhead, Minnesota. Mama Frase, the manager of Lake McDonald Lodge, was on the other end – “I have a job for you at Lake McDonald if you’re willing to work in the mess hall.”

It wasn’t the job I had applied for, but it was an opportunity I couldn’t refuse. Interviews for jobs in Glacier had been held in St Paul, but being in college and short of funds, I hadn’t been able to go.

June was rainy that summer at Lake McDonald, with frequent snowfall in the mountains. Since none of the high country trails were open, we had to spend our days off elsewhere. Three other girls shared my day off, and one, Elaine Hallside, had skied in the Junior Nationals on Big Mountain the previous winter and wanted to show us the view from the top.

The four of us decided to hitchhike to Big Mountain. (We weren’t allowed to have cars.) It was raining when we reached Whitefish, but we were undeterred. We pooled our cash and took a cab up to the Big Mountain Chalet and the ski lift.

In 1952, there was only a T-bar and a rope tow. Neither of them operated during the summer. But Elaine led us on foot up the mountain beside the T-bar and beyond to the very top. At the summit it was raining even harder and fog had set in obscuring our view.

Descending, we stumbled down a dry creek bed with heavy vegetation for hours, or so it seemed. I thought we were lost, and my friend Jan eventually started crying. Because of the fog, we couldn’t see the other two.

When it seemed we could go no further, I glimpsed the roof of the Chalet through the clouds - one of only two

buildings on the mountain. Later, Elaine told us she was following a telephone line down the mountain which had been set up for the Junior Nationals.

When we reached the Chalet, it was late in the afternoon and we had a long way to go. Somehow we got down to Whitefish and started hitchhiking back. We were so soaked and muddy that the only ride we got was in an empty cattle truck. At Lake McDonald the mess hall was closed, but someone in the kitchen felt sorry for us and fed us.

Later that night, Jan, who had been crying coming down the mountain, was sent to the hospital in Whitefish with an appendicitis attack. Her parents were contacted and she went home to Ohio. We didn’t see her again. Her summer in Glacier was over before it began. So much for Whitefish, Big Mountain and the Junior Nationals!

## *The Summer of '52 (continued)*

Because Logan Pass was still closed, we hitchhiked into Kalispell the next week. This was the first Montana town I had seen that I liked. The shopping was great at Hummer's and Harmon's – and on top of that, it didn't rain. Three years later, I would begin my career teaching English at Flathead County High School in Kalispell.

I'm getting ahead of my story. When Logan Pass opened, the high country was irresistible. Siyeh and Piegan Passes were two of my favorites. The bellmen at Lake McDonald were my partners on these hikes. I didn't hesitate to follow them. We skied down the vast snowfields on the other side of Siyeh Pass in our tennis shoes. What a thrill! Fortunately, we stopped before going over the cliff. The view was magnificent in all directions from Sexton Glacier on the right to Lake St. Mary in the valley far below.

Hiking in the shadow of Mt. Gould, on the Piegan Pass trail, we felt the cool spray of Feather Plume Falls arching high above us. Above the falls, a lone violinist perfected her arpeggios reaching the very portals of heaven. But what I remember most is a lovely scent somewhere along that trail still haunts me after all this time. Whether from flowers or bush, I'm sure others must experienced it too. It would be part of my Glacier Park experience that first summer that made an indelible mark on me.

Because I had afternoons off from my job in the mess hall, I was able to spend afternoons sun bathing on the beach at Lake McDonald. I can't say we swam much because the water was too cold, but we had our own employee beach away from the tourists. One afternoon I hiked with another employee to Fish Lake and back again in time to get to work.

The highlight of the summer was a moonlight employee boat ride on the lake. I had a date with a gearjammer and received my first French kiss at eighteen. Needless to say, that was the end

of our relationship. Other more pleasant dates with gearjammers were spent at the grill getting to know one another or at Whitey's in Hungry Horse dancing the night away. We knew that jammers had a girl at every hotel, but that didn't stop us from having a good time.

Other highlights of that summer at Lake McDonald included an employee Talent Night for the tourists in the recreation hall. I remember performing an original skit beginning with the words, "Would you believe it, I used to be an average college girl..." I had some experience in plays in both high school and college and liked to "ham it up." My roommate from Hawaii was a big hit with her hula dance complete with a grass skirt.

Hugh O'Brien and his leading lady also held court in the evening at the grill with the employees. They were filming in the park. I suppose one might say we were all "star struck."

Occasionally that summer, we would catch a glimpse of a small black bear or two feeding along Going to the Sun Highway a ways from the hotel. We watched as he or she ambled off into the woods and thought nothing more about it. One evening at dinnertime toward the end of the summer, a huge ruckus announced an uninvited guest. A grizzly bear was rummaging through the garbage cans outside the kitchen door! You can imagine the noise he made and the ensuing panic. This was the first time most of us had seen a grizzly. That was a wake up call.

Elaine Hallside, Audrey Pull and I had saved our best hike for the last so we'd be in shape. They were waitresses and brought me breakfast in bed the day we left to hike Gunsight Pass. Starting at Jackson Glacier Overlook, the hike to Gunsight Lake was beautiful though uneventful.

But climbing up Gunsight Pass made me feel sick to my stomach. It was fun to

see the goats on the pass, but as the others started down the trail to Lake Ellen Wilson, I decided to sit down and slide down the shale. It looked like the trail skirted the lake and I knew the other girls were planning to swim. I called ahead to them announcing my intention. They were quick to respond: "Don't do it! We'll come back and help you."

Hiking under the waterfall, it wasn't long till we reached the lake. Looking back up to the Pass, I could see how steep the fall would have been had I tried to slide down the shale, which ended in cliffs. (I may not have been here to tell the story.) As there was no one in sight, Elaine and Audrey skinny dipped in the lake, while I sat on the bank recovering.

I felt fine when we started hiking up Lincoln Pass. When we reached Sperry Chalet, we knew we had it made – six miles straight down to Lake McDonald. We'd never heard of hiking boots, so we hiked in sneakers. By the time we reached Lake McDonald, I had blisters on both heels as big as silver dollars. But we'd done it – 20 miles in one day!

Every day that summer of 1952, after the rains of June, had been picture perfect. It was like living in paradise, weather wise. But late that summer, there was talk about closing the park because of the lack of rain. Plans were drawn up. And then it started to rain and rained all day for several days. Just as suddenly as it started raining, it stopped; the weather turned beautiful again and it was time to leave.

That summer marked my coming of age. When I went back home and started my sophomore year in college, I knew who I was and knew that I had a passion for the West and the mountains. I had grown up through my experiences with people and my surroundings in a far away place. Glacier Park, in particular, would always be a launching pad to the fulfillment of my dreams.

# Making Music at McD, GPL and Many for 25 years

By Michael Ribner (*Glacier Park, Inc. 1990-2014*)

I can still vividly remember that fateful day in the early spring of 1990 when the phone rang and the voice on the other end said with a distinctive English accent, "Hello, Mr. Michael Ribner, this is Ian B. Tippet. You have been hired to work in Glacier Park and we are going to place you at Many Glacier Hotel for the summer where you will be the Entertainment Director. It will be the best summer of your life."

At the time, I was a recent college graduate with a music degree right out of the University of New Orleans, and I was trying to figure out what I was going to do with the rest of my life to make some money. Jesse Nolan, a music friend of mine at the college, told me how he had spent the last two summers as a singing waiter at Glacier Park Lodge just outside Glacier National Park. He told me about Glacier Park, Inc., and said they had a current practice of hiring Entertainment Directors to organize informal music in the lobbies at each of the three main lodges: Many Glacier Hotel, Lake McDonald Lodge, and Glacier Park Lodge.

This seemed exciting, and my friend further encouraged me by saying, "You'd be perfect for this job because you play piano, guitar, drums, you sing, and you have directed various music productions. And you will meet people from all over the country. And more importantly, I need you to play the piano for me when I sing!" So I sent in an application, and the next thing I knew, the phone was ringing on that fateful day. We loaded up my friend's small car and left New Orleans in mid-May to begin the long drive together across the country toward the best summer of my life.

When we arrived in East Glacier in May 1990, I was immediately educated by Mr. Tippet on the great history of the

musical productions at Many Glacier over the years. I had directed a few college musical productions myself, but it was obvious that times had changed, and the musical performances in the lobby of Many Glacier were now a much more informal thing, with each evening's entertainment being a type of "Variety Show."

One day, when I was hiking along beautiful Josephine Lake, I got the idea to stage the variety show like a real modern day variety show. So in that first summer of 1990, right there in the lobby of Many Glacier Hotel, we staged "Late Night 'Live' from Glacier Park," a David Letterman-style variety show that featured all the various employee musical talent at Many Glacier.

Hank, the dorm dad, acted as David Letterman, I was Paul Shaeffer. We had a full band, and various employees would parade "on-stage" and perform their musical selections in character. We had performances by "Julie Andrews", "Bob Dylan," and even "Luciano Pavarotti" to name but a few. Some humorous skits were interspersed between the musical selections, including: "Know Your Animal Tracks," "Conversations with a Grizzly," "Small Town News" (which featured actual humorous articles from *The Hungry Horse News!*) And I even created our own "Top-Ten List:" "The top ten things you will discover in Glacier Park." (#1: You will discover there is no TV in the hotel!)

I returned to Many Glacier as Entertainment Director again in 1993. This time I was armed with my recently received Master of Music Degree from Louisiana State University. It seemed that the pool of talented employees had declined somewhat from what it was in 1990. But I became close with the other two entertainment directors at Lake McDonald and Glacier Park Lodge, both of whom could sing and play well. Throughout that entire summer of 1993 we travelled

to each other's locations and performed full musical programs together as a "power-trio." During that summer I also composed many of my "Glacier Piano Reflections" pieces, some of which would later be performed by the Glacier Symphony at the Glacier Park Centennial Celebration in 2010.

The summer of 1994 marked the return of more formal staged productions at Many Glacier Hotel. The American Cabaret Theater was hired to stage its cabaret production of "Decades." Mr. Tippet called me to say that I would be the Music Director of the cabaret, and his enthusiasm was quite apparent. "Decades" ran for almost 70 nights that summer.

In 1995, I was appointed to be the Music Director of "Country Western Cabaret" at Glacier Park Lodge. The banjo skills of Charles Lackey from Nashville helped give that country western cabaret real authenticity, and it ran for about 70 nights. American Cabaret Theater continued a long run for about six more years with productions at both Many Glacier and Glacier Park Lodge.

Lake McDonald Lodge was where I spent the summer of 1996. I took a voluntary reprieve from the fixed repertoire of the cabaret productions to have more personal artistic freedom to perform variety shows again with the employees. The cozy atmosphere of the Lake McDonald lobby, with the piano right next to the fireplace, made for a wonderful performance venue for more intimate performances.

I played a lot more acoustic guitar that summer, probably more than ever before, and I created a rotating series of variety shows, each night with its own special theme. "Mountain Music," "Popular Classics," "Broadway Hits" and "Old Time Cowboy Songs" were but a few

**(continued on page 22)**

# A Coffee Shop Romance in '74

By Carole (Cox) Murphy (Lake McDonald 1973-74)

This year, 2014, is a year of many anniversaries significant to my experience as a GPI employee at Lake McDonald Lodge. On June 14, the lodge that I love turned 100 years old. The centennial celebration was fun, sentimental, and well attended.

One morning late in June, on a particularly trying morning, I seated a pair of campers at a two top in the center of the restaurant. As I dashed frequently past their table, I heard wisecracks directed at me. This gave rise to banter between them and me, a very pleasant reprieve from being sweet for a few seconds at a time. Eventually, the tour finished their

Soon it was the beginning of August. A waitress had seriously cut her hand. We had to switch jobs until she healed enough to be able to get it wet again. I was in the kitchen one morning on waitress duty. The temporary hostess dashed in. "Carole, Detroit's back! I set him in your station."

In the dining room, at a two-top close to the one at which I had initially seated him, was Murphy. He had a different friend with him. This guy, Chris, had a twin sister who had worked at the Lake McDonald Lodge front desk for three years. Martha's last year had overlapped my first, so I knew her. Murphy's and Chris's first exposure to Glacier Park had been due to visiting Martha at Lake McDonald in 1971.

Again, I spent time with them, woke them on the beach, listened to their hiking stories, fed them in the Coffee Shop, and heard about Nixon from them. As they prepared to leave, they offered me a ride home in a VW bug. With raised eyebrow, I pointed out that I was female, and had packed to live in the park for the whole summer. I was not going to fit in a VW bug.

It takes 36 hours to drive between West Glacier and Detroit, Michigan. In just over 36 hours from when they left, I received a call in the Coffee Shop. Murphy was home, and wondering if he could pick me up at the train station in Detroit. I agreed. We married in 1976.

Over the years, we have come home to Glacier whenever possible. Our three children think of Sprague Creek Campground #8 as their summer address. We built our retirement home outside of West Glacier.

Forty-one years ago, I fell in love with Glacier Park and Lake McDonald. Forty years ago, I fell in love with a man who feels the same love that I do for Glacier Park. During the centennial celebration, Mark Hufstetler said that working at Lake McDonald Lodge changed his life. It changed my life too. How could I have been so fortunate?

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*Having a rather blunt and sometimes caustic demeanor, it was a challenge for me to be the saccharine sweet personality required when keeping a restaurant full of touring "old" people happy while they worried about missing their tour.*

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June 8 and 9 marked the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Flood of '64, in which the Flathead River ran so high it took out the West Glacier bridge and forced McDonald Creek to run backward. Snyder Creek took out a corner of the Lodge's dining room in addition to other damage. I used to imagine what that must have looked like as I walked to work each day from Cobb Cottage to the Coffee Shop in 1973 and 1974.

August 8 is the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the day I heard that President Richard Nixon had announced that he would resign the next day. I heard that news while standing on the steps of the Coffee Shop. The summer of 2014 is also the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of when I met my husband, in, of course, the Coffee Shop.

In 1974, I was a hostess in the Coffee Shop. I had been a salad and sandwich prep cook the preceding year, so this was my first experience working with the public. Having a rather blunt and sometimes caustic demeanor, it was a challenge for me to be the saccharine sweet personality required when keeping a restaurant full of touring "old" people happy while they worried about missing their tour on the red bus. I did a lot of coffee and water pouring at breakfast time while assuring the customers that their waitress/waiter would be with them soon and the "bus boy" would not leave without them.

breakfast, the Coffee Shop emptied, and I had an opportunity to stop and chat with the two young men at that table.

We have all had that conversation where questions lead to more questions as we find more and more common ground. "Where are you from?" "Detroit." "So are we!" "Where do you go to school?" "Wayne State University." "I just graduated from there!" (This was Murphy.)

"What are you majoring in?" "Elementary Education." "When and where are you student teaching?" "In Hazel Park, this fall." "What building, which teacher?" "Mr. Crabtree." "My classroom is two doors down from his!!!" (This was Tom.)

I spent some time with the two while they were there. They camped on the beach in front of the cabins. I woke them on my way to work so they wouldn't get caught. We had a drink or two together in the hotel lounge. I talked Tom, the vocal music teacher, into singing with us on Sunday evening during the employee songfest in the lobby. As they prepared to leave, I asked them to write. I love getting mail.

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*As I dashed past their table, I heard wisecracks directed at me. This gave rise to banter, a very pleasant reprieve from being sweet for a few seconds.*

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# Piegans in Portland

*(A Blackfeet Promotional Tour for Glacier in 1913)*

By Tessie Bundick (*Many Glacier* 1972-80)

Portland, Oregon, is a beautiful town and has often been called "the City of Roses". In June of 1913, it was decided that a group of "Glacier Park Indians", (the Blackfeet or Piegan) from the Browning, Montana reservation, adjacent to Glacier National Park, would travel west to Washington State to be a part of Portland's famous Rose Festival.

The use of these native Americans for publicity purposes was nothing new for the Great Northern Railway, the corporation that was building chalets and hotels in the newly minted Glacier Park and was very enthusiastic about promotion. Other Blackfeet contingents had been sent to the eastern United States (New York, Chicago, and Washington D.C., among others) during the years since the official congressional designation (1910) of this beautiful tourist destination in the northern Rockies. These trips were splendid advertising for the Great Northern as the Blackfeet always created a great sensation where ever they went.

on this trek were familiar with what was expected of them. They were old hands at this sort of thing and knew just what to do. Really they were quite profes-



*(photo courtesy of Ray Djuff collection)*

## Piegans in Portland (continued)

sional performers. They were paid \$1.50 per day, along with room and board and, of course, transportation, as well as care if anyone became ill. In 1914, a group of the Blackfeet lobbied for a raise to \$3.00 per day for the eastern trips, plus groceries for their families that were left behind. As Three Bears noted in a letter the Louis Hill, the executive chairman of the Great Northern board of directors, "They are sure to run out of grub before we return."

Traveling by train, the party was accompanied by J.A. Shoemaker, special representative for Louis Hill, and Charles Griffin. Included in the Native American roster were Lazy Boy, John Kicking Woman, Long Time Sleep, Calling Dawn Woman, Mrs. Dog Ears, Stabs by Mistake, Medicine Owl, Mrs. Medicine Owl, Judge Wolf Plume, Mrs. Judge Wolf Plume, James White Grass, Fred Big Top, John Ground and daughter, Three Bears and Mrs. Three Bears, plus one or two others. Also along was Miss Maggie Champine, a woman from Birch Creek with native blood who represented an "Indian Princess". She had been a crowd favorite during a 1912 tour of the east and was known as "Dawn Mist".

The group arrived in Portland on Sunday, June 8th. On the morning of the 9th, pitched teepees on the roof of the Multnomah Hotel. This inn was named after the local Multnomah tribe, great warriors, who used to come into the country of the

Piegans on the Montana plains to hunt buffalo.

The Blackfeet, in their native finery, were a huge hit, enchanting a 1,000 guests, with their drums and the women's chanting. They danced for "King Rex" of the Rose Festival and posed as an escort for Miss Spokane (in her Indian costume). Long Time Sleep made a speech in Piegans. They pleased the many reporters at the Portland Press Club and Dawn Mist made a beautiful oration that thrilled all present.

During the week, they received enthusiastic, warm applause as they rode in an automobile parade. They also gave a performance for the wives and children of the reporters of the Press Club. They were given dinners and were present at moving picture shows where they saw themselves on film (taken earlier in the week).

After a wonderful reception, the Great Northern party traveled to the Spokane Pow Wow, staying at the beautiful new Davenport Hotel. Their teepees were raised, and Mr. Davenport, himself, put up two large signs which read, "Davenport Hotel's First Guests, the Glacier National Park Indians". The Blackfeet were led through the main dining room, when coming from their meals, and gave a cabaret performance each time.

During their time in Spokane, they appeared onstage before a Pathe movie called "Newspaper Men in the Park". It was shown before a large and appreciative audience. Long Time Sleep stood on the side of the stage in a red spotlight and delivered a lecture as the film rolled. Dawn Mist made another speech to a most appreciative crowd. Some of the current publicity called her "the most beautiful Indian maiden in the world".

Chief Three Bears garnered his own attention by claiming that his father was the Piegans who guided the Lewis and Clark expedition through the pass in the Rockies where the city of Helena is now located. He even said that he remembered meeting Sacajawea! After this trip through Oregon and Washington was completed, Shoemaker reported, "I do think we have covered the west now, from a publicity standpoint, as our big field is the south and east until 1915."

The Blackfeet, shedding their acquired modern ways for these promotional jaunts, donned what colorful clothing from the "old days" that they owned, and used as many props as they had on hand. Trying to make a living in the white man's world, they slipped back into a mythic past to be what the Great Northern expected and the stereotypes that their adoring audiences wanted.

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*The Blackfeet, shedding their acquired modern ways for these promotional jaunts, donned what colorful clothing from the "old days".*

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*(photos courtesy of the Ray Djuff collection (F.J. Haynes photo); photos courtesy of the Ray Djuff collection (Fred Kiser photo); Minnesota Historical Society, Great Northern Railway collection)*



Three Bears, Lazy Boy, and Fred Big Top in ceremonial dress.

# A Summer with Ian Tippet

By James Reiersen (*Many Glacier* 1977)

I grew up in Spokane, Washington, and prior to 1977 had only been in Glacier Park one time in 1960. My mother had taken me and my two brothers on the Great Northern train to East Glacier, where we stayed at Glacier Park Lodge. In 1960, the eastbound Empire Builder left Spokane in the morning which gave riders the spectacular vista ride with dome cars. Mom had been with United Airlines as a stewardess during World War II after graduating from Sacred Heart School of Nursing in Spokane in the late 1930's. Her Dad was a Union Pacific passenger train conductor, so mom and her sisters were able to travel around the country on his rail pass. She loved to travel and wanted her sons to see new places and meet different people. Dad was a busy doctor, delivering over 6,000 babies during his career, and had little time to travel.

I joined the U.S. Navy in 1968, serving as a radioman in the elite submarine service, known as the 'silent service.' When I decided to get out and complete college in early 1977, my mother suggested I apply to work in Glacier Park the summer before classes started at the University of Montana in Missoula. I did apply, and Mr. Tippet called my mother from his 'winter' Arizona office to inquire if I could start in early May as his secretary at Many Glacier Hotel. He told her he was impressed with my military service record and the fact that I had been able to obtain an Associate Degree while in the Navy. Mom wrote to me shortly before I left my last submarine that was based

overseas in the Philippines about his call and the fact he had "a wonderful British accent" and was so nice on the lengthy call he had with her. For someone who hired hundreds of employees each year, for him to take the time to call my mother showed how concerned he was in filling positions with just the right applicant.

I hit the road in a 1938 Buick I had purchased in Portland, Oregon, and had stored for years in Spokane. It was early May of 1977 when I pulled in to East Glacier, and parked next to an historic red bus that had also been built in the 1930's. After a great evening meal, two other new employees and I followed Mr. Tippet up the winding road to Many Glacier. He was driving a huge white Lincoln Continental at a very fast clip! There was still a lot of snow on the ground. Since I was to be working with Mr. Tippet he felt the front desk manager and I were "management" and should room together in the hotel rather than in the men's dormitory. Hervey Smith had worked summers at Many Glacier before and was a real professional, having experience in a large chain of hotels. He was indicative of the large number of employees that wanted to come back to that wonderful large hotel with Mr. Tippet at the helm. They liked being able to hike, work with good people, and enjoy this pristine National Park.

Mr. Tippet was rarely found sitting in the manager's office, as he was a hands-on person, and was always roaming the huge hotel to ensure the work was being done, and coordinate with the owner at that time, Mr. Don Hummel. He

was people oriented, professional at all times, and had the ability and charisma (Just like the submarine commanders I had worked for) to get people to work hard and understand the importance of being responsible. Mr. Tippet was the kind of boss you respected, because he made you understand it was a privilege to be working in this great hotel to host the guests, and ensure they had a good time while visiting Glacier Park. Working at Many Glacier Hotel was not just a job, but a learning experience that gave me a greater appreciation of why setting aside National Parks to preserve the land for people to visit and enjoy is so important. Although he told me I could address him as 'Ian,' I found it hard to do. He was always dressed impeccably, getting his clothes from a British clothing store, and telling me how important it was to make a good appearance. He was formal and had a dry sense of humor, and everyone seemed more comfortable addressing him as Mr. Tippet.

He had been trained as a chef years before and personally oversaw the daily menus and ensured that the food preparation was first rate and service as fine as in any fine restaurant. One time, one of the waiters set up a container on a table outside the main hotel restaurant and marked it for "tips." Within ten minutes the roving Mr. Tippet discovered it, removed it, and reprimanded the employee, remarking "I've never seen such an outlandish display!" When employees had to be terminated (and this was rare), Mr. Tippet would remark, "Yes, I've sent him down the road."

## ***Summer with Ian (continued)***

Mr. Tippet was an accomplished musician and responsible for putting on great musicals each year at Many Glacier. A lot of the employees were music majors and volunteered many hours to make these shows a success. He also hosted a “Thursday Night Serenade” which I tried to not miss from my perch at the rail of the 4<sup>th</sup> floor, above the main lobby. I also volunteered to help as a part-time

bartender and server, but on Thursday nights, I’d buy a couple of Coors and relax to hear the volunteer show that guests got to attend for free. I got to have a much greater appreciation for music, largely based on this summer of 1977 at Many Glacier Hotel.

Mr. Tippet has had an incredible influence on thousands of seasonal employees over the past 50 plus

years, including me. He made me want to do more and help people. He changed my outlook on life, and I’d like to think I am a better person. I have made it back to Glacier Park as often as I could over the years, although as a career prosecuting attorney, my court schedules often make vacation time hard to get. I was only able to work one short summer at Many Glacier Hotel, but it was the best job I have ever had.

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## ***Making Music (continued from page 17)***

of those themes. I fondly remember the night Nikki Johnson (from the “Decades” cabaret at Many Glacier in 1994) came to sing jazz standards with me in the lobby. And once again I staged “Late Nate ‘Live’ from Glacier Park” right there in the lobby at Lake McDonald, featuring special musical guests “John Denver,” “Billy Joel” and even “Andrew Lloyd Weber!” It was a magical summer making music on the shores of Lake McDonald.

Since 2002, I have been working as the Entertainment Director at Glacier Park Lodge. During that time, endless musical activities and productions have been presented for the guests’ enjoyment. Music directors and employees from the past have come to perform, including one year when Roger Stephens visited and we performed together in the lobby. (Roger was the musical director for many years in the 1960s and ‘70s with Mr. Tippet at Many Glacier.) I fondly remember the few times when Mr. Tippet himself performed on the piano for the guests. We have had classical, jazz, Broadway, folk, pop, multi-media presentations, drama, Indian dancing, ‘late-night’ variety shows, and an almost endless array of performances through the years, right in the lobby of Glacier Park Lodge.

The last several years have been amazing. I left Glacier for a week in the summer of

2009 to attend a performance of one of my original symphony works in Carnegie Hall in New York. You may have heard the saying, “How do you get to Carnegie Hall?” (The fundamental answer is: “practice.”) My own personal answer is: “You go through Glacier Park first.”

In the summer of 2010, the Glacier Symphony in Kalispell performed another one of my original “Glacier works” for orchestra at the Glacier Park Centennial concert. In 2013, Glacier Park Lodge celebrated its centennial. There was an employee reunion with three continuous days of music, memories and magic in the great lobby. This summer of 2014 is Lake McDonald’s centennial.

During the fall, winter, and spring seasons, I return to my home in New Orleans to work as a music teacher. I have been teaching full-time at the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts since 1996. I also teach music composition at the University of New Orleans, and I have taught various music courses at Loyola University, Delgado Community College and Louisiana State University. New Orleans is a great city of music with many diverse influences. Working with all the talented music students in the New Orleans area all winter truly prepares me to come up to Montana each

summer to entertain the guests in the great lodges of Glacier National Park.

It’s funny how it seems that you’d better be careful what you ask for in life, because you just might get it! Long ago, during my first summer playing music in Glacier Park in 1990, I remember saying to myself, “This is something I could surely do for the rest of my life.” And now all these years later, in 2014, I am still doing it! It is something that I truly love to do.

It is such a joy to entertain the wonderful guests in the great lodges of Glacier Park. The incredible people and musicians I have met and performed with over the years have all been truly amazing. I have truly been blessed to have received this incredible opportunity, and I hope that the music that I have provided over the years has blessed those who have been able to hear it.

Thank you so very much, Mr. Tippet, for the opportunity you first gave me 24 years ago in that summer of 1990. And thank you, Mr. Cadrette, for the opportunity to return again in 2014. Glacier Park changed my life, just as it surely has changed the lives of all who have visited. And, Mr. Tippet, you were so right when you said it would be the best summer of my life – but I had no idea that the summer would be at least 24 years long!

## ***(Inside Out continued from page 4)***

happy trails. Glacier Park will never be the same without you, Mr. Tippet, but your legacy will surely endure forever.”

### **GPI in West Glacier**

In early July, Glacier Park, Inc. completed the purchase of the West Glacier Mercantile Company from the Lundgren family, complementing GPI's existing operations in and around Glacier National Park. Included in the sale are approximately 200 acres of land in West Glacier and businesses which include the West Glacier Motel & Cabins, the West Glacier Restaurant & Bar, the West Glacier Mercantile, the West Glacier Gift Shop and other guest services. Additionally, the sale includes 3.8 acres of inholding within Glacier National Park in Apgar, the Apgar Village Lodge, the Cedar Tree Gift Shop, and staff housing units in Apgar and West Glacier.

“We are very excited about this opportunity to offer our guests a wider range of accommodation and recreation options and to extend our position as the Gateway to Glacier,” said Ron Cadrette, GPI's Vice President and General Manager. “We have great respect for what the Lundgren family has built in West Glacier. We will strive as a company to preserve and honor what they have created including their reputation for offering great hospitality to guests and an engaging work environment for staff.”

All 151 employees in the West Glacier and Apgar businesses involved in the purchase were hired on by GPI as part of the transition. GPI plans to operate the businesses in West Glacier and Apgar with minimal changes for the 2014 season. “This addition perfectly complements our existing operations in and around Glacier National Park,” said Cindy Ognjanov, President of GPI. “The Lundgren family has a remarkable history in West Glacier and we look forward to carrying on their traditions in this historic town. GPI has long served as a steward for the preservation of historical properties including the 101-year-old Glacier Park Lodge and the 87-year-old

Prince of Wales Hotel and our commitment to these treasured places will continue in all aspects of the operation of our company.”

### **Xanterra Builds Facilities**

Xanterra Parks and Recreation, Glacier's new concessioner, is developing facilities in Columbia Falls to support its operations. Administrative offices, a warehouse, and a laundry facility are being installed in preexisting buildings on Highway 2. Xanterra's staff will move to the new facility from its temporary offices after this summer.

Meanwhile, planning is underway for a new 40,000 square foot transportation facility. It will provide a home base, maintenance, and winter storage for Glacier's historic red bus fleet. The buses were stored last winter at the Kalispell airport, and will be in temporary storage again this winter pending completion of the new garage.

### **Many Glacier Reflections**

Emily Hackethorn of the Glacier Park Boat Company at Many Glacier sends these reflections: “The summer days are flying by, and the nights are turning chilly. Some days feel like a forecast for the Fall. Glacier Park marked its busiest July to date, with a record number of visitors counted at the entrance gates.

“The boats have been running smoothly, with plenty of extra runs throughout the day. We are planning to restore the famous “Joy” rowboat in time for next summer's Centennial! I love hearing Joy Paulson stories from visitors every summer. Next summer, we'll be welcoming another boat to our fleet at Two Medicine.

“The transition to Xanterra at Many Glacier has been smooth, as many key employees, especially location manager Helen Roberts, have been here to set the tone. Our efforts to continue the Hootenanny have been quite successful. We've had many new performers this year. It is so exciting to see people

grow through music (myself included!) throughout a quick summertime here. We hope to bring violinist Dan Robbins back for his tenth summer in 2015. We are also hoping to restore the Monday night Hoots as Sundays have been a difficult time slot for us.

“Overall, the goal is music as a major touchstone of any guest's experience here, any day of the week. I am working and communicating to make sure this is a priority for Xanterra in the future.

“In conjunction with the Many Glacier Centennial next summer, I am also working on a documentary about the musical tradition. I'm seeking help in collecting any archival material that you have to offer. All material will be returned and credited to the owner.”

### **2015 Many Glacier Reunion**

Many Glacier Hotel will celebrate its centennial in 2015. Plans are in place for an alumni reunion from Friday, July 31 through Sunday, August 2. Corie Jones (MGH '77-'80) is generously chairing the reunion committee. Please contact Corie at [cjmath@gmail.com](mailto:cjmath@gmail.com), or by mail at 5325 Black Lake Blvd. SW, Olympia, WA 98512, or by phone at 360-753-9612, to register for the reunion.

Reunion participants must make individual rooming reservations. For rooms at Many Glacier or Swiftcurrent, please call Xanterra reservations at 855-733-4522. Other rooming alternatives include St. Mary Lodge (406-732-4431), Johnson's of St. Mary (406-732-4207), and Thronson's of Babb (406-732-5530).

Principal events at the reunion will include a Centennial Hootenanny on Friday evening (hosted by Tessie Bundick) and a Centennial Serenade on Sunday evening (hosted by Carol Repulski Dahle). A community dinner will be held on Saturday evening in the pavilion at Johnson's Restaurant at St. Mary. The reunion also will include history programs developed in conjunction with the Park Service and Xanterra.

# 2014 GLACIER CUP CHAMPIONS



*The 2014 Glacier Park Lodge soccer team, winners of the interlodge soccer championship, with lodge manager Kathy Eiland. Back row: Kamil (Czech Republic), Miro (Bulgaria), Zack (New York), Wojciech (Czech Republic), Sefa (Turkey), Alan (North Carolina), Joshua (Spain), Kimroy (Jamaica), Liz (Washington State). Front row: Dejan (Macedonia), Kathy (Alabama), Kyle (Montana). Not pictured: Lyuben (Bulgaria).*

## 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)*

