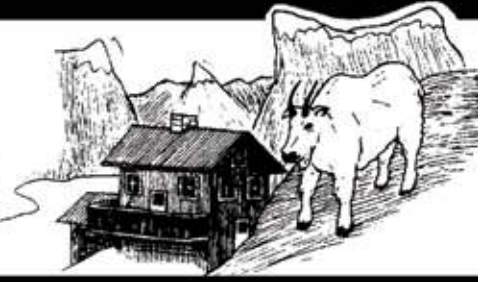


# THE INSIDE TRAIL



Voice of the Glacier Park Foundation  Spring 2019  Volume XXXIV, No. 1

## THE BOATS

### *A History of Boat Concessions in Glacier*



*The good ship St. Mary on St. Mary Lake, circa 1920. Colorized photo courtesy of Fergus Prestbye.*

*In this issue:*

- *The New Musical Tradition at Glacier Park Lodge*
- *Hitchhiking and Hiking in the 1940s*
- *Oddities and Idiosyncracies of the 1960s*
- *A Gearjammer's Return*
- *John Turner Passes Away at Age 103*
- *Reunions and Partings*
- *Inside News of Glacier Park*

# Sun Road Planning at a Key Juncture

The National Park Service soon will release a Draft Management Plan for Going-to-the-Sun Road. The Draft Plan will set out a Preferred Alternative and other management options for review and public comment. This will be a crucial step in Glacier National Park's response to enormous increases in visitor traffic.

Glacier had 2.1 million visitors in 2012. By 2017, the number had increased to 3.3 million. Last year, the number was nearly as high (2.9 million), although the Howe Ridge Fire compelled the evacuation of much of the Park's west side in August. These increases have caused severe congestion on Going-to-the-Sun and other roads, in parking areas and on trails.

In 2013, the Park Service began developing alternatives for managing Going-to-the-Sun. Through a public scoping process, it formulated Preliminary Alternatives in the Spring of 2015. Those alternatives are posted on the Glacier Park website.

The Preliminary Alternatives offer options for maintaining, increasing, or discontinuing shuttle service on the road. The number of vehicles allowed on the road (especially if shuttle service were discontinued) might be controlled "by timed entry or a reservation system." Time limits for parking are among the measures proposed, as are expanded parking spaces.

Glacier's Preliminary Alternatives also suggest requiring permits for day hiking on some trails during peak season. The number of hikers on popular trails such as the Highline and Avalanche Creek has increased dramatically.

One alternative calls for a "flexible decision-framework" for responding to various "triggers" (visitation levels, numbers of vehicles, trail use levels, and the like). The alternative sets out various responses, properly calling for managers to use the "least restrictive actions first."

The Park Service will develop and choose among these alternatives (or others) in its pending Draft Management Plan. Well-informed public comment will be crucial to its ultimate implementation. The Glacier Park Foundation looks forward to offering its comments on the Plan. We urge members visiting the Park to evaluate conditions there and help us formulate constructive comment.

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*Glacier had 2.1 million visitors in 2012. By 2017, the number had increased to 3.3 million.*

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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*

## **Boat Concession Up for Bids**

Glacier National Park's historic tour boats are operated under a 10-year concession contract. The current contract expires at the end of 2019. Bids have been solicited for a new contract. Proposals were due by the end of April.

The Glacier Park Boat Company has operated the boat concession since 1938. It submitted a bid for the new contract. Competing bids may have been submitted by other companies, including those that presently operate boat concessions in other national parks. The Park Service Regional Office declines to release information on pending bids.

The Glacier Park Boat Company owns its boats, four of which (the DeSmet, the Sinopah, the Little Chief, and the Morning Eagle) are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. If another operator is granted concession rights, the Boat Company could sell the historic boats or could simply remove them from the Park. A new operator might seek to buy the historic boats or might build a new fleet.

The prospectus for the new contract states that the Park Service "desires boats that reflect the historic nature of the boat tour experience in the Park." It specifies characteristics like those of the current fleet – a v-shaped hull, with seats mostly covered, painted white, with accent colors approved by the Park Service.

The new contract will authorize (but not require) two boats on Lake McDonald, where the DeSmet historically has been the sole vessel. It will maintain the current complement of

two boats on St. Mary Lake and one each on Two Medicine Lake, Swift-current Lake and Lake Josephine.

The concessioner will be required to rent small watercraft, as the Boat Company presently does. Motorboats are to be rented on Lake McDonald and Two Medicine Lake. Kayaks, canoes, and rowboats are to be rented in specified numbers at Apgar, Lake McDonald Lodge, Many Glacier and Two Medicine.

The prospectus gives financial data from recent years. It reflects the enormous upsurge in visitation to Glacier Park. In 2015, the Boat Company earned \$1.4 million in revenue from 68,459 boat tour passengers. In 2017, the Company earned \$2.1 million from 86,109 passengers.

The prospectus includes criteria for evaluating bids. A Park Service panel will score bids from 0 to 5 on four primary factors: (1) protecting, conserving and preserving resources; (2) providing visitor services at reasonable rates; (3) financial capability; and (4) the amount of the proposed franchise fee and other consideration paid to the Park Service. It will score bids from 0 to 3 on environmental management, and from 0 to 2 on increasing accessibility. Notably, experience and background will be assessed but will not figure into the scoring.

## **Tragedy at Lake McDonald**

The winter of 2018-19 was unusually harsh. Flathead Lake, south of Glacier Park, froze for the first time since 1993. Lake McDonald froze as well. It attracted many visitors for ice fishing, skiing, or just walking on the ice. Tragically, one visitor fell through and drowned.

48-year-old Wei Liu, of Tempe, AZ, died near the boat dock at Lake McDonald Lodge. After he was reported missing, his car was found at the lodge. A dive team deployed a remote operated vehicle underwater which found his body.

## **Conservancy Projects**

The Glacier National Park Conservancy raises private funds to supplement the federal budget for Glacier National Park. The Conservancy hopes to provide \$2.3 million for projects in Glacier in 2019. (This is in addition to the Conservancy's Sperry Action Fund of \$2 million to help fund the renovation of Sperry Chalet.)

One striking project is an observatory at the St. Mary Visitor Center, with two telescopes in a small rotating dome. The dome was constructed in 2018 and will begin operating this summer. Screens outside can be viewed by visitors, and remote access will be available. Glacier and Waterton have been designated as the world's first International Dark Skies Park.

The Conservancy will contribute funds to 64 projects in Glacier (not including Sperry Chalet) in 2019. Among those projects are bear management, boat inspections to prevent mussel infestation, protection of native fish, and research on lynx, elk, mountain goats, and other species.

The Conservancy is funding many internships and volunteer programs to supplement Park Service staff. These programs are vital to help serve the greatly increased number of visitors to Glacier. The Conservancy will fund eight interpretive interns, three backcountry interns, and a service-

## *(Continued from previous page)*

and-resources-management intern.

The Conservancy also partners with the Montana Conservation Corps to fund crew that assist with trail maintenance and other projects. There are youth crews, adult crews, crews of military veterans transitioning to civilian employment, and Blackfeet crews. Conservancy funding for these crews has nearly doubled, from \$69,000 in 2017 to \$132,000 in 2019, reflecting the Park's need for extra help.

Another Conservancy-sponsored project is "Preventive Search and Rescue." Paid and volunteer personnel are stationed at trailheads to talk with hikers, checking to see if they have proper equipment and if they understand the challenges of the trail. This program began on the Highline, to forestall frequent heat exhaustion problems at the Loop, and may be expanded to other locations.

Donations to the Conservancy can be made online at [www.glacier.org](http://www.glacier.org), or by mail to P.O. Box 2749, Columbia Falls, MT 59912. Donations can be designated wither to the general budget or the Sperry Action Fun.

### **Lodge Notes**

Ron Cadrette retired recently as general manager of the Pursuit Collection (formerly Glacier Park, Inc.). His successor is Gary Rodgers, who formerly managed the Copper Mountain ski resort in Colorado. Rodgers is overseeing extensive renovation at Glacier Park Lodge and other facilities.

Marc Ducharme, general manager for Glacier's lodging concessioner Xanterra, reports that Nell's Diner at Swiftcurrent and Jammer Joe's Pizzeria at Lake McDonald Lodge will offer a "fast casual dining" model

this summer. Patrons will order at the counter, receive a number, and sit down for delivery of their meals. The object is to serve more patrons as Park visitation increases.

Veteran managers are returning for both Pursuit and Xanterra at all the major lodges. They include Eric Kendall at Many Glacier, Bob Abrams at Lake McDonald Lodge, Angel Esperanueva at Swiftcurrent, John Bloem at Glacier Park Lodge, Helen Roberts at St. Mary Lodge, Chris Caulfield at Prince of Wales Hotel, and Todd Aiken at West Glacier.

### **Park Service Innovations**

To help Glacier visitors deal with congestion, the Park Service is rolling out a "Recreation Access Display" on its website. It will offer travelers real-time information on weather, vehicle restrictions, and parking lot information, among other matters. This is an expansion of the campground-status page, which has been in place for a number of years.

### **Infrastructure Work**

The abominable Many Glacier entrance road will receive attention this summer. Sections of the road that run along steep hillsides have been plagued with slumping. Groundwater seeps beneath the roadbed, which sags and collapses and causes pavement to break up.

The Park Service is partnering with the Federal Highways Administration to pilot a horizontal drain system that may help with some of the areas where slumping occurs. Other minor work on the road will continue this summer with more extensive repair planned for 2020.

Buildings at both Rising Sun and Swiftcurrent were painted last fall.

The Rising Sun registration building that houses the Two Dog Flats restaurant was repainted yellow instead of brown. Swiftcurrent was covered with a fabric instead of plywood for the winter, due to the painting.

Pavement preservation work will be done on Going-to-the-Sun Road in June and in September. It will involve chip sealing to protect the new road surfaces laid down in recent years. The decade-long Going-to-the-Sun restoration project cost around \$200 million.

### **A Waterworks Crisis**

Glacier has a labor shortage, as seen in the many international students who travel thousands of miles to work in the Park. Some instances of the shortage are striking. One is a lack of trained utility operators for Glacier's waterworks.

Two Medicine Camp Store is opening later than usual (on May 27) for lack of an operator. Goat Haunt may not have a functioning water or power system at all for part of the summer. The Goat Haunt Shelters will be unavailable until the problem is solved, and the International and other tour boats may not be allowed to land.

### **The Shutdown**

Last January's government shutdown was challenging for the Park Service. January largely is devoted to planning and hiring, and the staff has had to scramble in order to catch up. Park Service personnel expressed gratitude for the support that they've been given by local communities and local nonprofit groups.

# Glacier's Historic Boats

## *Great Stories of Glacier's Boats*



Captain Billy Swanson aboard the DeSmet, on his way to launch it on Lake McDonald in 1930.

*(Photo courtesy of Scott and Barbara Burch.)*

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

Organized boating in what is now Glacier Park began around 1892, when the Great Northern Railway established Belton station two miles south of Lake McDonald. Local settlers offered rowboat rides across the Middle Fork of the Flathead River, followed by wagon rides to the lake. An eyewitness recalled that H.D. Apgar drove a sort of “circus wagon,” “painted red with a lot of gold on it.”

The site which now bears Apgar’s name, at the foot of Lake McDonald, had a small fleet of rowboats for hire. Those boats ferried travelers up

the lake to Kelly’s Camp (a cluster of cabins run by Frank Kelly) or to the Snyder Hotel (built and run by George Snyder on the present site of Lake McDonald Lodge).

Rowing boats up the big lake was arduous work, and tourists certainly must have found the ride forbidding in windy weather. In the mid-1890s, Snyder introduced a little steamboat, the *F.I. Whitney*. Kelly launched several gas-powered boats a few years later.

### **The Cattle Queen’s Mishap**

One of Glacier’s most colorful boating tales dates to 1895. It involves Libby Collins, the legendary “Cattle Queen of Montana.” A movie by that name,

wildly fictionalized, later starred Barbara Stanwyck and Ronald Reagan).

Libby Collins made her name on a ranch near Choteau. She then turned her energy to mining on the west side of what would become Glacier National Park. She upgraded the Indian trail over Swiftcurrent Pass to bring supplies to her claims (one of which was called Wake Up Jeff). The main claim, where Collins worked for three summers as cook and foreman, was in the upper McDonald Valley, on Cattle Queen Creek.

Collins’s partners in this venture included Frank McPartland. McPartland was a rough frontiersman who

murdered a man on the Blackfeet Reservation and got away with it when no witnesses appeared. His watery demise is related vividly by C.W. Guthrie, Dan and Ann Fagre in *Death & Survival in Glacier National Park*.

McPartland, Collins and her brother Chan spent a day at Snyder's Hotel, disputatiously drinking. Finally they departed in a rowboat with a jug of whiskey. McPartland stood up to go for the jug and tipped the boat over. Struggling in the water, McPartland grabbed hold of Collins's cloak, which was fastened around her neck with a chain. She released the chain to keep from choking, and McPartland sank, clutching the cloak.

Chan and Collins clung to each

other's hands across the boat and yelled for help. George Snyder came to the rescue on the *F.I. Whitney*. The Cattle Queen (who by no means resembled Barbara Stanwyck) weighed 300 pounds, and could not be lifted aboard the launch, so they towed her to safety with a rope.

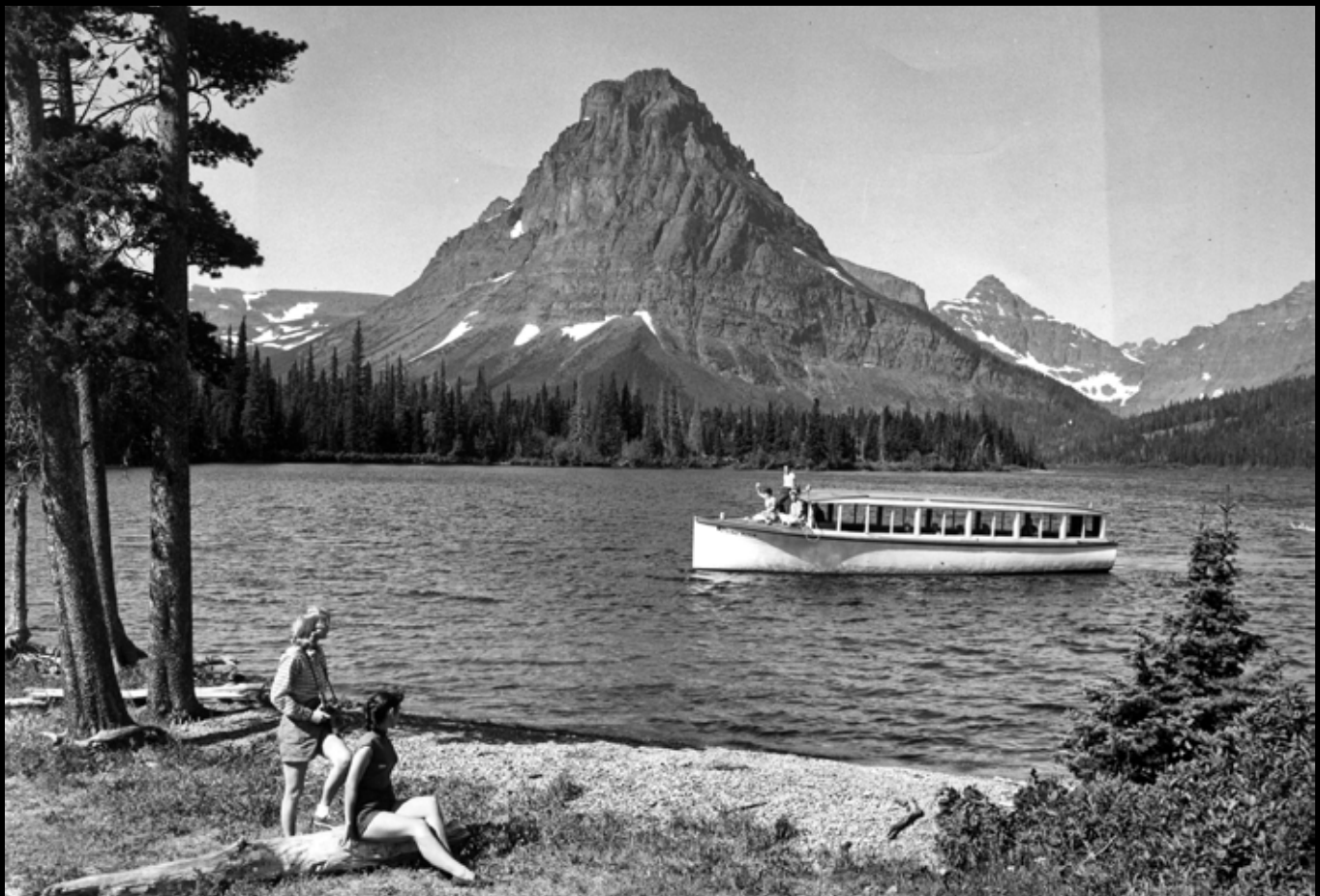
### **Captain Billy Swanson**

As the Lake McDonald proprietors sought to build boats, they turned to the already-flourishing boating culture on nearby Flathead Lake. That lake was a conduit for commerce between the Great Northern Railway and the Northern Pacific Railway to the south. Boat-building shops flourished in the ports of Somers and Polson, turning out recreational and commercial craft.

One shop in Somers was owned by a man named John William Swanson. He had built his first boat as a teenager in Seattle, then moved to Montana in 1906 at the age of 23. In the next few years he created numerous large steamboats on Flathead Lake and established himself as a leading builder.

Glacier National Park was established in 1910. Frank Kelly and his partner Orville Denny obtained a concession contract to transport passengers on Lake McDonald. They hired Swanson to build the launch *Ethel*, which started regular runs in 1911 from Apgar to Kelly's Camp and to the Snyder Hotel.

In 1915, Swanson transferred a 60-foot boat, the *City of Polson*, from Flathead Lake to Lake McDonald. He



*(Photo courtesy of Scott and Barbara Burch.)*

travelled up the South Fork and the Middle Fork of the Flathead River, and then up McDonald Creek. James Hackethorn, the historian of boating in Glacier, states: "The epic journey up river proved Swanson a man of great skill and ingenuity; he and a crew of six men took two weeks to navigate about 60 miles of rapids, rocks, and sand bars and deliver the boat to Lake McDonald. Once there, he dry-docked the boat, added ten feet to its length and rechristened it *Lewtana*."

Such exploits earned Swanson fame and the sobriquet of "Captain Billy." He played the leading role in Glacier's boating history for three decades.

### **Boats on St. Mary Lake**

The Great Northern Railway energetically built nine chalet clusters in the early years in Glacier National Park. The largest of these was Going-to-the-Sun Chalets, which stood dramatically on Sun Point, on St. Mary Lake. St. Mary Chalets were six miles away at the lake's east end, near the St. Mary townsite.

The Great Northern launched two gasoline-powered boats to run between these chalets in 1912. The *St. Mary* could carry 100 passengers, and the smaller *Glacier* could transport 20. In 1916, the railway hired Swanson to run these boats.

At Sun Point, porters had to transport baggage steeply uphill from the dock to the chalets. This chore was accomplished picturesquely by a horse named Uncle Sam, and by a St. Bernard dog tethered to a cart!

### **The *Wymufus***

In 1919, Captain Billy Swanson applied to Glacier's Superintendent for permission to operate an east-side boat concession. He proposed to offer row-boats for hire on Two Medicine Lake, Lake McDonald, and Lake McDermott (later named Swiftcurrent Lake).

He also proposed to operate a launch on Two Medicine Lake and to add one on Lake McDermott "when facilities there permit."

A concession contract was granted to Swanson. He built the small gasoline launch *Wymufus* to operate on Two Medicine Lake.

In 1925, he completed two similar 36-foot launches. They worked in tandem in the Many Glacier Valley. The *Grinnell* ran on Lake McDermott, and the *Josephine* (later renamed the *Altyn*) ran on Lake Josephine. Passengers walked a quarter-mile between the lakes, as they have ever since.

### **Building the Historic Fleet**

The boats which have been mentioned so far lie decomposing at the bottom of Glacier's lakes. The *Lewtana* (named for John Lewis, creator of Lake McDonald Lodge) was scuttled in Lake McDonald in 1929. The *Wymufus*, *Grinnell*, and *Altyn* deteriorated and were scuttled in the 1940s.

The next generation of Swanson's boats, however, still ply Glacier's waters. Their stout construction and many years of operation have brought these five vessels a place on the National Register of Historic Places.

In 1926, Captain Billy built the first of these five boats, the *Little Chief*, for the Great Northern. It went into service on St. Mary Lake alongside the larger and older *St. Mary*. After World War Two, it was renamed the *Sinopah* and moved to Two Medicine Lake, where it operates today.

In the same year, Swanson built the *Rising Wolf* for his own boat concession. It ran on Two Medicine Lake (in tandem with the *Wymufus* and later with the *Sinopah*). In 1975, it served briefly at Many Glacier, where it was damaged by winter snow. It was restored, renamed the *Little Chief*, and

stationed on St. Mary Lake, where it operates today.

In 1926-27, Swanson built his biggest boat, the 73-foot, 250-passenger *International*. It was commissioned by the Great Northern's Glacier Park Hotel Company. Swanson built it on-site, in a new boat house at the head of Waterton Lake, where it winters today.

In 1930, Swanson built the *DeSmet* for the Glacier Park Transport Company, which had obtained the Lake McDonald boat concession. The *DeSmet* has run on Lake McDonald every summer since, except for three summers during World War Two when gas rationing suspended operations.

### **The Model T Engine**

Colorful tales surround the *International's* boat house, at the head of Waterton Lake. Swanson constructed it as a shop in which to build the boat and as its winter dry dock.

The building was placed at the U.S. end of the lake so that the boat would have American registry. But the remote location caused challenges. All the materials, including prefabricated parts of the boat, had to be brought by road to Canada, unloaded at the Waterton dock, and then shipped down the lake.

There was no electricity at the boat house. Swanson installed a Model T gasoline engine there, which had to be started with a hand crank. All the power tools in the boat house were run by belts attached to the engine.

This Rube Goldberg arrangement was preserved for many decades. It gave rise to a famous story involving Cy Stevenson. Cy was chief engineer for the Glacier Park Hotel Company and its successor concessioner, Glacier Park, Inc. He was amazingly adept at handling obsolete equipment, and he also had a legendary temper.

Cy's assistant Howard Olson related this tale for *The Inside Trail*: "One time Cy was cranking the Model T motor when it backfired and almost broke his arm. Cy was so mad that he threw the crank into the lake – too deep in to retrieve it, and they had to bring another one up from East Glacier."

### **The Glacier Park Boat Co.**

Captain Billy Swanson's wife Emma became dissatisfied with Montana's ice and snow. In the mid-1930s, the couple began to spend their winters in California. Swanson decided to sell his boats.

In 1938, two Kalispell businessmen paid Swanson \$25,000 for the boats, boathouses, equipment and concession rights. They named their venture the Glacier Park Boat Company. One partner, Carl Anderson, left the company shortly afterward. The other partner was Arthur Burch, whose family has run the boat concession for 80 years.

Swanson worked closely with the new company. He helped run the boats in 1938, and he agreed to help build a larger boat to replace the *Altyn* at Many Glacier. That project had to be deferred during World War Two, when Swanson supervised naval shipyards in Los Angeles.

In 1945, Swanson and Burch collaborated to build the *Big Chief*. It ran on Swiftcurrent Lake from 1945 to 1961. Then it was renamed the *Morning Eagle* and moved to Lake Josephine, where it operates today.

Arthur Burch's son Arthur, Jr. or "Art" was ten years old when his father brought the concession. He grew up learning to run and maintain the boats. In 1967, Art and his wife Billy Ann bought the company from Art's father. They ran the concession for many summers, living in the boat crew quarters at Lake McDonald and Swiftcurrent Lake with their children.

In the wintertime, Art built boats at his shop in Evergreen. He built the *Chief Two Guns* for Swiftcurrent Lake, several versions of the *Curly Bear* for St. Mary Lake, and the *Wanda Mae*, *Roddy Paul* and *Connie Marlene* for Waterton Lake. He also trucked the Glacier Park motor launches to the shop for periodic maintenance.

### **The Wreck of the *Two Guns***

In the fall of 1974, the Burches trucked the *Morning Eagle* from Lake Josephine to Swiftcurrent Lake on an old logging road. They then trucked it around the Park to Evergreen for refitting. They moved the *Chief Two Guns* from Swiftcurrent Lake to Lake Josephine and shut it in the boat house for the winter.

Several months later, a huge cornice of snow collapsed on Grinnell Point. An avalanche swept down and flattened the boat house. The *Two Guns* was carried some 80 yards across the ice that covered Lake Josephine.

The Park Service gave the Burches permission to take snowmobiles to inspect the damage. The *Two Guns* was on its side, with the superstructure torn off and with chunks of the boat house driven through its hull. The Burches salvaged life preservers and other items, then roped the hull to trees on the shore and waited for the ice to melt.

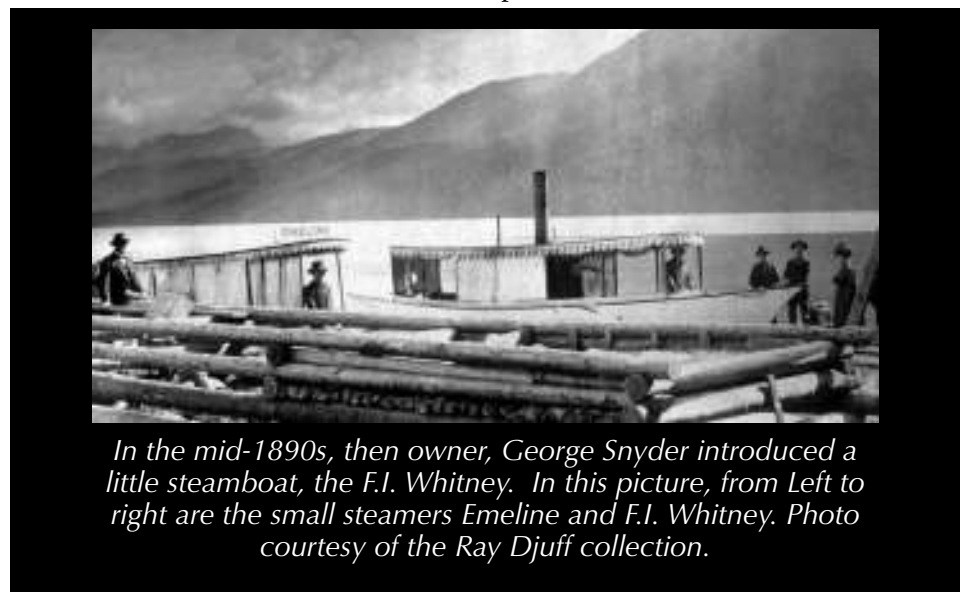
Spring left the shallow water at the site "an undulating mass of debris" (trees,

chunks of the building, and other flotsam) as remembered by Art's son Scott Butch. The leaking *Two Guns* floated amid the mess, with about two feet of freeboard. The hull was black with spilled engine oil.

Art and his sons towed the *Two Guns* to the outlet of the lake with a motorboat. In Stump Lake (between Lake Josephine and Swiftcurrent Lake), the hull repeatedly was grounded. It had to be raised with jacks and winched with "come-alongs." Finally, the *Two Guns* reached Swiftcurrent Lake, where the Burches beached it, cleaned off the oil and patched the hull.

The next challenge they faced was to move the refitted *Morning Eagle* upstream to its customary place on Lake Josephine. The passage took five days of jacking and winching. (Ordinarily, the boats could have been hauled overland from lake to lake on the logging road. But a flood in the spring of 1975 had left the road impassible, so the route across Stump Lake had to be used.)

The Burches brought the *Rising Wolf* from Two Medicine to Swiftcurrent Lake to take the *Two Guns*'s place there. The *Two Guns* itself went to Rising Sun, where for the rest of the summer it ran (on sunny days) with no superstructure and tourists riding on open benches. Eventually it was refitted and returned to its former place on Swiftcurrent Lake.



*In the mid-1890s, then owner, George Snyder introduced a little steamboat, the F.I. Whitney. In this picture, from left to right are the small steamers Emeline and F.I. Whitney. Photo courtesy of the Ray Djuff collection.*



### **An International Adventure**

In 1977, the Burches bought the launch *International* from Glacier Park, Inc. Cy Stevenson showed them the antique arrangements in the boat house. He helped them raise the 50-ton boat up rails into the shed with a cable attached to the Model T engine.

The following spring, the Burches returned to the boat house and started to lower the boat back down the rails. The cable paid out very slowly, and the *International* inched toward the water at a snail's pace. Scott Burch recalls, "Art wasn't real patient. He took the motor out of gear and let the boat slide by its own weight. It took off like a freight train! There were crows in the rails, and the hull flexed when it hit them. Seams split apart and windows shattered. Art's eyes got big as the boat splashed into the lake – we were lucky that it didn't derail. He said, 'I guess we won't do *that* again!'"

### **Grandchildren at the Helm**

In the mid-1980s, a third generation of Burches took over ownership of the boats. Art and Billy Ann sold the company to their sons Arthur and Scott, their nephew Mark Van Artsdale, and their wives. Scott and his wife Barbara later bought the shares of the other partners, and they run the company today.

The *DeSmet* played a major role in fighting the Howe Ridge Fire in 2018. Firefighters and sawyers slept at the Sprague Creek campground on Lake McDonald, and the boat made scores of runs to transport them to Kelly's Camp at the north end of the lake.

### **Great Tales of the Boats**

*The Inside Trail* has carried some vivid stories of the boats across the years. Here are a couple of the best.

In 1959, the employees at Lake McDonald Lodge held a nocturnal party on the *DeSmet*. Patrick Springer recalled: "We stealthily moved the band's equipment onto the *DeSmet*. ... Employees brought aboard two kegs of beer, trays of food from a secret cache, the drum set, the piano bench, and the sheet music. Finally, a sturdy group came staggering up the gangplank with the piano and placed it on the upper deck of the boat.

"My recollection is that, with the exception of Mr. Tippet [the lodge manager], Mrs. Putney, and John Bell (the lookout man), every member of the Lake McDonald hotel staff was on the *DeSmet*. Everyone was hushed.

"We poled the boat well away from the dock before gingerly starting up the motor. When we were well out on the lake, the kegs were tapped and the partying began. I went up on the top deck and seated myself at the piano. The mountains and Lake McDonald were gorgeous in the moonlight, and our friends all were enjoying a marvelous time. We began to play our music with gusto.

"Unfortunately, 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. Soon we saw ranger vehicles proceeding up the road from headquarters to the lodge.

"Still, we had no idea that we were in trouble until a ranger with a bullhorn hailed us from the Sprague Creek Campground. He ordered the *DeSmet* off the lake, with emphasis on the word 'immediately.' The captain did as he was told and headed back to the hotel dock, while the merriment continued.

"When we moored at the dock, we were met by a squad of rangers and by Mr. Tippet, in an indignant state. His initial impulse was to fire every employee on the boat – not being aware that literally every employee was on the boat. The upshot was that I alone was fired, and all the rest were allowed to leave the *DeSmet* and go home to bed."

A final tale involves one of the greatest practical jokes in Glacier Park history. It occurred on the *Chief Two Guns* on Swiftcurrent Lake. Late one summer, the crew decided to surprise a veteran ranger who often rode the boat with them and conducted a tour.

As the *Two Guns* finished a cruise, the crew idled the motor about 50 feet from the dock. The skipper told the passengers: "It's been a great trip. Now the ranger will dock the boat for you." With that, the crew members (fully clothed) dived off the side of the boat and swam to shore!

The ranger must have experienced quite a blast of adrenalin, having no idea how to run the boat. The passengers likely felt a tremor of uncertainty as well. But after brief suspense, another boat crew member, concealed among the passengers, stepped up and docked the boat.

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*In the mid-1980s, a third generation of Burches took over ownership of the boats. Art and Billy Ann to their sons Arthur and Scott, their nephew Mark Van Artsdale, and their wives. Scott and his wife Barbara run the company today.*

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**Don Witt** (pictured here) and **Jim Templeton**, Many Glacier Hotel employees in the early 1960s, bivouacked overnight on Grinnell Point. Jim recalls that they strung a rope across their sleeping bags for “a false sense of security.”

# *A Memorial to* **JOHN TURNER**



*John and Mary  
Turner. (Photo  
courtesy of the  
Turner family.)*

## ***Glacier's Oldest Gearjammer Passes Away***

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*We finally have lost him. John Turner, the dean of Glacier Park's gearjammers, died recently at the age of 103. John wrote many articles for *The Inside Trail*, recalling events and times in Glacier of which he was the last witness.*

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We finally have lost him. John Turner, the dean of Glacier Park's gearjammers, died recently at the age of 103. John wrote many articles for *The Inside Trail*, recalling events and times in Glacier of which he was the last witness.

John drove red buses from 1936-39. He was transport agent at East Glacier from 1940-41. Going-to-the-Sun Road over Logan Pass had opened just three years before his first summer. The present red bus fleet (now probably the oldest fleet of buses in the world) had not yet arrived in Glacier.

In John's first summer, he drove a "cranker" – one of the original red buses, which had to be started with

a hand crank. They were manufactured in Cleveland by the White Motor Company in the 1920s.

John described these vehicles as follows: "magneto ignition, sixteen inch wooden steering wheel, acetylene headlamps, brown canvas fold-down top, leather seat covers, rear mounted luggage rack ... too bad if you were driving when it became dark and didn't have matches (several) to light the headlamps."

That summer of 1936 brought the Heaven's Peak Forest Fire. It jumped Swiftcurrent Pass on an evening in late August and roared down the Swiftcurrent Valley. It very nearly burned Many Glacier Hotel. John recalled, "A few of us were having a day off at the

Entrance (East Glacier Park) when Sid Couch, the dispatcher at Many Glacier, phoned down to Page Stanley, the Entrance dispatcher, to send buses as quickly as possible to evacuate the hotel guests."

The drivers were dispatched at once, without changing into their uniforms. John recalled that the buses had mechanical "governors," which kept them from exceeding 40 mph. But the drivers had learned to how to jump the governors and speed up to 50 mph or more. They used this technique in order to expedite the run to Many Glacier.

When they reached the hotel, the relief drivers found that most of the guests already had been evacuated by the buses on site. The remain-

ing guests wanted to stay and help fight the fire. The relief drivers were put into service as firefighters, too. John shared vivid memories of the fire in *The Inside Trail*:

“This fire happened 76 years ago, and over the years I have relived the experience – the massive wall of flames charging toward us, gale force winds snapping and popping pine trees like match sticks, two mountains aglow with fire, and flaming debris flying all around us.... The air was filled with red burning debris, cinders, and smoke, igniting one fire after another and making breathing a significant problem. Covering our heads with wet rags helped somewhat. Strong wind gusts made it very difficult to move around and keep balanced.

“The wind was so intense across the lake it was literally picking up sheets of water and misting the hotel structure. Some of us were convinced that this strange phenomenon played a significant part in helping the firefighters save the hotel from burning down.

“Sid Couch organized the gearjammer firefighters to save the employees’ and gearjammers’ dormitories and the bus garage. ... I recall that most of our effort was trying to snuff out all of the spot fires that kept cropping up in the dry bushes around the garage and dorm.

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

“In only a few hours the whole fabric of the Many Glacier land-  
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scape had changed from luxuriant green lodgepole pines to defoliated, smoldering spikes. ... I have come to believe there was a Divine Hand present, or the hotel and dormitories would have been destroyed.”

Returning in 1937, John was assigned a brand-new White Motor Company red bus – bus number 99, which still is in service today. He recalled that it “had no more than five miles on the odometer when I headed out with my first load of ‘dudes’ across Logan Pass.”

John’s articles in *The Inside Trail* related carefree memories from the 1930s and ‘40s. One was the long-standing softball rivalry between the gearjammers and the lodge employees at the Entrance Hotel.

Games were played weekly after dinner at the Transport Company compound in East Glacier. The field was a dirt-and-gravel park-

surgeon for U.S. Olympic teams) as the star player for the opposing Entrance Hotel team.

John recalled working with a device called the Kerry Kleaner. The company installed it in 1937 to clean the undersides of the new buses. This was an onerous task for the drivers, as he picturesquely described:

“The Kleaner had a rack to drive the bus onto and elevate it into the air. A trigger-operated nozzle released a high pressure mixture of steam and harsh chemicals that stripped the tar, oil, and anything else from the chassis. Who can forget those nasty sessions? All the ‘crud’ was supposed to fall into the sludge pit under the rack, but most seemed to end up on the operator. If you weren’t wearing a ‘g-suit,’ forget about going on a date that night!”

John told arresting tales of his backcountry adventures in the Park.

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*“[O]ver the years I have relived the experience (of the 1936 Heaven’s Peak fire) – the massive wall of flames charging toward us, gale force winds snapping and popping pine trees like match sticks, two mountains aglow with fire, and flaming debris flying all around us ... making breathing a significant problem.”*

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ing lot, and John recalled “lots of skinned knees and elbows” from that unfriendly surface. Two big garages encroached on the outfield (like the Green Monster at Fenway Park), and balls hit onto their roofs were treated as ground-rule doubles.

John remembered the gearjammer team of 1937 as the best ever. He fondly recited most of the lineup seven decades later. He remembered Harvey O’Phelan (who later became a distinguished orthopedic

He once took a slide down Grinnell Glacier, stopped a few inches from a crevasse, then threw a rock into the crevasse and never heard it hit the bottom. Another of John’s adventures recalls the tightrope walker Blondin above Niagara Falls – John climbed out on a tree limb above a 300-foot drop, and *stood on his head!*

John’s favorite story, however, involved meeting Mary, his wife of

62 years. John related this tale to Leroy Lott, who shared it through *The Inside Trail*:

“John met his wife Mary in Glacier in 1941. As Transport Agent at the Entrance, John was furnished an advance list of employees arriving on the Great Northern’s Empire Builder. John perused the list and ran across the name of Mary Treacy. He says that he fell in love with her name.

“John tried diligently to cross Mary’s path on her arrival at the depot. He missed her there and first encountered her three weeks later at a dance at the hotel. He asked her to dance, and he was ever so pleased when she provided her name! They began their courtship while walking on the golf course that night, sipping from one bottle of beer.”

John and Mary were engaged by the end of the summer. Four months later, Pearl Harbor was attacked, and the country entered World War Two. John left school and went to work in California as an aircraft engineer, designing warplanes.

Mary came to California and married John in 1942. They built a home in Granada Hills, outside Los Angeles, and lived there till the end of their days. They had six children and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren. The family always remained close-knit.

John had a remarkable professional career, developing ejector seats for military jets. He was Vice President of Engineering for Weber Aircraft. He worked on the Gemini space capsule, designing an ejector seat that saved an astronaut’s life.

John faithfully tended Mary through years of declining health.



*John and Mary Turner with their children. (Photo courtesy of the Turner family.)*

In 2004, their children and grandchildren planned a reunion in Glacier Park, assuming that neither of their parents could attend. Weeks before the reunion, Mary died.

The family carried on with the trip to Glacier. John (88 years old, and having been homebound for a decade) surprised them by making his own way to Montana, joining them for the reunion. He rode Glacier’s roads again and was reunited after 65 years with red bus number 99.

As more years passed, John gradually lost the use of his legs. But he remained vigorous, cooking meals, baking bread and carrying out his housework and yard work with the help of a wheelchair. He carried on an active e-mail correspondence past the age of 100.

Gearjammers of later eras rallied to

honor John in his later years. Two Californians, Don Perry and Ed Baretta (jammers in 1959) introduced themselves to John and established a custom of giving him a birthday dinner. Leroy Lott (class of 1949 and ’50) solicited birthday greetings to John from his enormous alumni list, and dozens of former drivers responded.

As a crowning honor, John was asked to ride in a 1925 Glacier red bus in the Tournament of Roses Parade. Bruce Austin, the owner of the bus, arranged for the chairperson of the parade to go to John’s home and give him the invitation. The bus was a “cranker,” similar to the one that John had first driven in 1936.

John always concluded his e-mails with “blessings!” He has been a great blessing to the Glacier community and to his innumerable friends.

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*John had a remarkable professional career, developing ejector seats for military jets. He was Vice President of Engineering for Weber Aircraft. He worked on the Gemini space capsule, designing an ejector seat that saved an astronaut’s life.*

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# Thanks to our generous donors!

The Glacier Park Foundation gratefully thanks the many generous donors who've contributed funds beyond their membership dues. GPF remains an all-volunteer effort. We deeply appreciate the extra contributions which help fund our projects and our publications.

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Carl Van Valkenburg

## **“Go Fund Me” page for Ian Tippet**

Many Inside Trail readers know and love Ian B. Tippet, former manager of Lake McDonald Lodge and Many Glacier Hotel and former personnel director for Glacier Park, Inc. He profoundly influenced the lives of thousands of Glacier Park employees through the decades, and we are deeply grateful to him. Mr. Tippet now is 87 years old and experiencing difficult times, including medical problems. A “Go Fund Me” page has been established for him.

*We hope that you'll consider giving what you can to assist this marvelous man in this season of his life.*

**To contribute, go to the GPF Facebook page to find a link.**

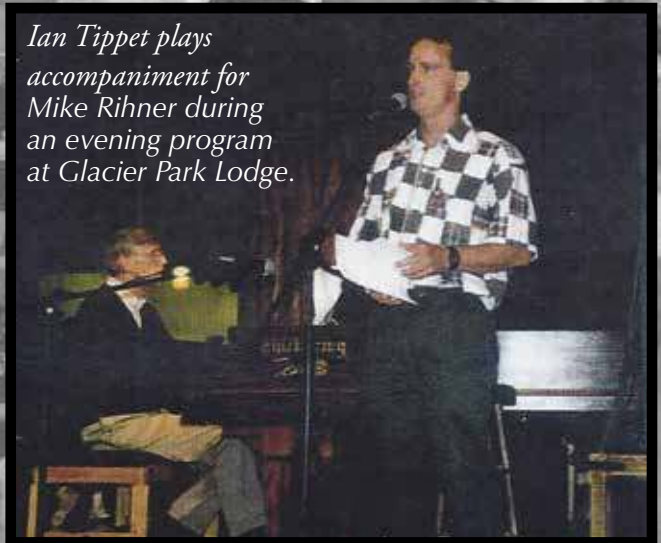
*East Glacier Country Music Band, 1995*



# The New Musical Tradition at Glacier Park Lodge

*By Mike Rihner (Many Glacier, Lake McD, GPL, 1990-95, 2002-2018)*

*Ian Tippet plays accompaniment for Mike Rihner during an evening program at Glacier Park Lodge.*



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*The performers mentioned are just a handful of the many talented people who have shared their musicianship with the guests and graced the “stage” that is the lobby of Glacier Park Lodge.*

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The great history of music performances and Broadway productions at Many Glacier Hotel during the golden years when Mr. Ian B.

Tippet managed the historic lodge has been well documented. Mr. Tippet created a musical legacy at Many Glacier that touched thou-

sands and will live forever in the hearts and minds of employees and guests who visited the park in those golden years.

All Photos  
courtesy of  
Mike Rihner



*Ben Darce*



*Mike Rihner,*



*Grant Sorlie*



*To*

GLACIER PARK  
PRESENTS

**MIKE  
"RHINESTONE"  
RIHNER**



PIANO, GUITAR, AND VOCALS

**EVERY  
WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY,  
FRIDAY, AND SATURDAY**

**WED. JULY 11<sup>TH</sup>  
THRU  
SAT. AUGUST 4<sup>TH</sup>**

**EAST GLACIER PARK LODGE  
7PM UNTIL 10 PM**



*Wayne Murphy*

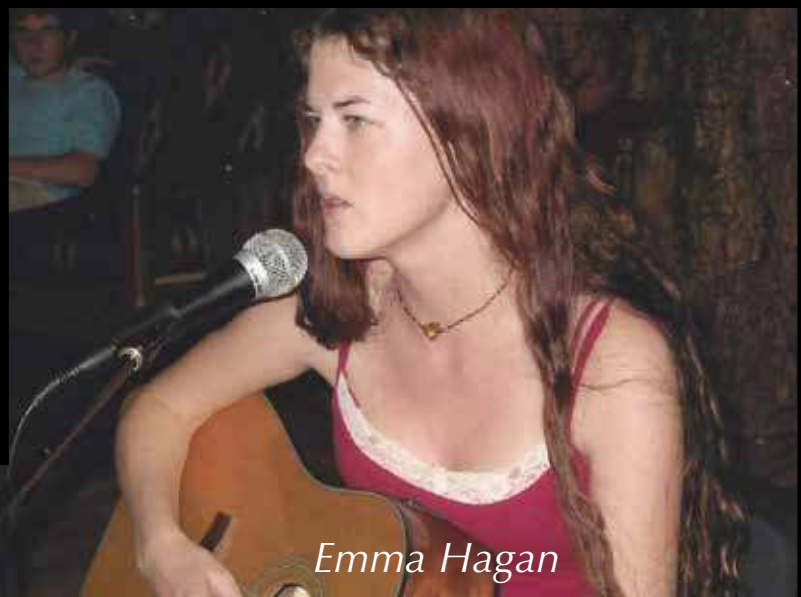


*Rob Styron*





*Ian Tippet, Roger Stephens*



*Emma Hagan*



*odd Gray*

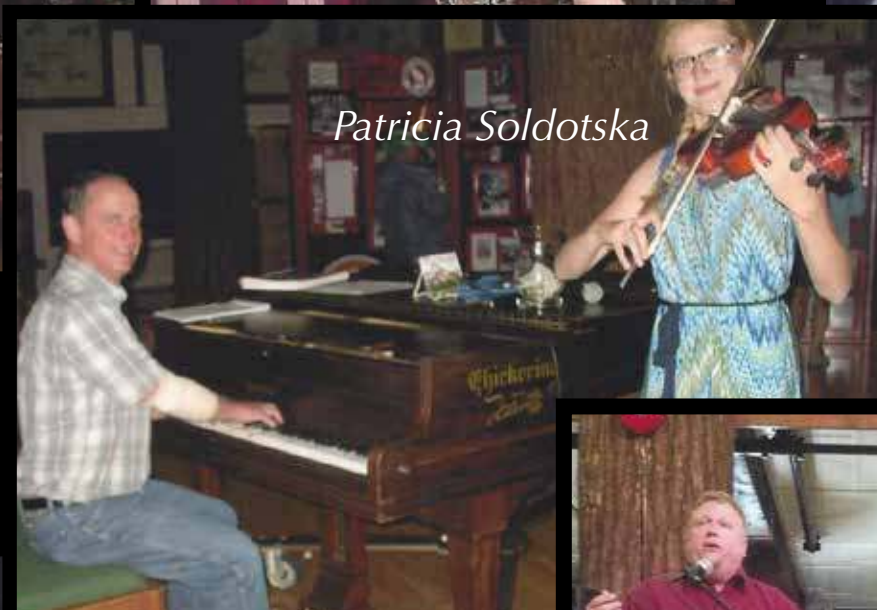


*McKenzie Sherburne*



*Julie Smythe*

*Fred Logan*



*Patricia Soldotska*



*Rob Styron*

*Jessie Nolan*

Although the last Broadway musical was performed at Many Glacier in the summer of 1983, Mr. Tippet continued to hire musicians each summer for all three major hotels, including three entertainment directors. He placed one director at each location: Many Glacier, Lake McDonald, and Glacier Park Lodge. This was how I came to the Glacier Park experience. In 1989 I graduated from the University of New Orleans with a degree in music, and I was pondering my next move. A friend of mine told me about the summer music tradition of Glacier Park, and so I sent in an application and applied for the position of "Entertainment Director."

I still vividly remember the day when the phone rang in the early spring of 1990. A very genteel man with a distinctive English accent was on the phone offering me the position of Entertainment Director at Many Glacier Hotel. "As Entertainment Director," he said, "it will be your job to organize, rehearse, and perform various solos, duets, trios, and whatever you can put together with other employees for nightly entertainment in the lobby of the hotel. You will also play piano music in the dining room during dinner hours and organize a dining room choir." Mr. Tippet explained to me the awesome and rich tradition of music he had created at the historic hotel, and although the Broadway musicals were no more, he told me he still expected these more informal evening lobby shows to be at a high level with regard to musicianship and repertoire.

I spent that summer of 1990 directing the music at Many Glacier. Fred Logan was Entertainment

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## *1995 was my first summer working as Entertainment Director at Glacier Park Lodge.*

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Director at Lake McDonald, and Julie Smythe was Entertainment Director at Glacier Park Lodge in East Glacier Park.

Musical hits from *Phantom of the Opera*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Oklahoma*, *The Fantasticks*, *Pippin*, *Godspell*, *Guys and Dolls*, *South Pacific*, and *The Sound of Music* echoed through the great Many Glacier Hotel six nights a week in that summer of 1990. I especially remember alto singer Jenny Knight from Indiana, who had a beautiful and expressive voice. Tenor singer Jesse Nolan from Baton Rouge was dynamic and powerful and received thunderous applause each time he sang.

Being from New Orleans, of course I had to bring some jazz into the mix, and so eventually a jazz quartet was formed with other employees. Jazz classics like "Basin Street Blues," "Take the 'A' Train," "Route 66," "Don't Get Around Much Anymore," and many others were performed regularly. There were at least a half dozen really good singers and several instrumentalists, including a drummer, saxophone player, violin player, and clarinet player. Eventually I started composing my own arrangements and original music for those instrumentalists. It was then that the "Glacier Classic Quartet" was born. We performed many times that summer.

Over the years, Mr. Tippet had amassed a large collection of sheet

music that was stored in a small closet in the basement near the St. Moritz Room. Thanks to this large library that Mr. Tippet had created, great classics like "Danny Boy," "Moon River," "Stranger in Paradise," "Shenandoah," and many more made their way into the nightly repertoire. The dining room choir would regularly sing "Food, Glorious Food," "Consider Yourself at Home," and "Put On a Happy Face." I spent two more years as Entertainment Director at Many Glacier Hotel, in 1993 and 1994. Each summer was more magical than the previous one.

In 1996 I worked at Lake McDonald Lodge. I did variety shows in the lobby almost every night that summer. The night that Rodney Erickson (the dorm dad) hosted our evening variety show as "David Letterman: Live From Lake McDonald Lodge" was a highlight.

1995 was my first summer working as Entertainment Director at Glacier Park Lodge. Little did I know at the time that I would eventually return to work at the majestic lodge for 17 consecutive summers, from 2002 through 2018! A major highlight from my first summer was the night when Mr. Tippet agreed to play piano for me while I sang two of his personal favorites: "Danny Boy," and "Jerusalem."

That first summer of '95 at GPL we had formed the "East Glacier Country Western Band" for the American Cabaret. It featured the

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*Little did I know at the time that I would eventually return to work at the majestic lodge for 17 consecutive summers, from 2002 through 2018!*

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awesome talents of banjo player Charles Lackey from Nashville. Charles's authentic banjo picking and country vocal "twang" was pure gold. I played piano, wrote arrangements for the group, and directed the band. Timeless country classics like "Great Speckled Bird," "I Walk the Line," "Crazy," and "Tumbling Tumbleweeds" echoed through Glacier Park Lodge all through the summer of 1995. Gretchen Bradley from Salt Lake City mimicked the Patsy Cline voice perfectly, and she got great applause every night she sang.

Since 2002, I've been very fortunate to return each year as Entertainment Director at Glacier Park Lodge. I have been a professional music teacher in New Orleans since 1996, which means that I have the summer months off of work. This creates the perfect scenario for me to return to Glacier Park each summer during my time off.

When I first returned to work at Glacier Park Lodge in 2002, the company had virtually stopped actively recruiting musically talented employees. Many employees were now coming from foreign countries. In addition to a series of themed variety shows that I performed myself, I decided to create an audio-visual show for the lobby with original music, video images of the park, narration, and humorous historical anecdotes about famous places in the park.

The result was "Glacier Piano Reflections", which I performed quite often at GPL for the next several years. It seemed to be a real crowd-pleaser for the guests. These piano pieces eventually became "Peace Park" for symphony orchestra, which was performed by the Glacier Symphony in July 2010 as part of the Glacier National Park centennial concert celebration at Rebecca Farms in Kalispell.

One of the outstanding highlights from those early years was the summer of 2006 when Roger Stephens and his wife visited Glacier Park Lodge. Roger was the musical director for many of Mr. Tippet's elaborate Broadway productions at Many Glacier in the golden era. To meet and talk with him and Mr. Tippet and to hear their stories from that magical time was quite simply fantastic. After sharing several stories and much laughter, Roger asked if he could sing a song with me in the lobby show that evening. I was thrilled! We had a quick rehearsal before dinner. That night I played piano while Roger passionately sang the melodious and poignant "Without a Song." The lobby erupted in unbridled applause at Roger's dynamic singing. It was a magical performance.

It was about 2007, I believe, when I formed an acoustic duet with guitarist Wayne Murphy, the warehouse manager at GPI from 2000-2012. We called ourselves "The Bear Grass Boys." We performed dozens of

times both in the lobby and in the Arrow Room of GPL, playing classics from Bob Dylan, Neil Young, and Jim Croce, among others. I've included a photo of us from around 2009 performing in the Arrow Room. "The Bear Grass Boys" also performed at various other locations in the area over the years, including The Snow Slip Inn, The Belton Chalet Tap Room, and Summit Station.

Although musicians now are not actively recruited as they were in the old days, there are always a handful of employees who have rich musical talents to share. Jazz guitarist Ben Darce from Austin, Texas has worked as a waiter in the Great Northern Restaurant at Glacier Park Lodge for the past ten years. He and I have performed quite a lot as a duo during this time. He earned his degree in jazz music studies from the University of North Texas. Ben is an avid mountain climber and he loves Glacier Park as much as anyone I know.

Violin player Patricia Soldotska from Poland has worked in the Great Northern Restaurant for the past three years, from 2016 thru 2018. In 2017 we performed several times as a duet, playing various classical themes and some traditional polkas.

Former GPI employees often show up to visit the park again and perform. Singer Jesse Nolan (Lake McDonald '90 and '91) and Robert Styron (Many Glacier '91) have both returned several times over the past two decades. In 2014, we formed a vocal trio and sang a collection of various American folk songs. On another occasion, Rob played flute while I played guitar and sang Paul McCartney's "Fool on the Hill."

Vibraphone player Grant Sorlie, who now lives in Kalispell, worked at Many Glacier Hotel in the “golden era,” from 1980-1982. Grant has volumes of stories to share from the old days at Many Glacier. After meeting each other at the Many Glacier Reunion in 2015, we finally were able to get together to perform an exciting duet of classic standards in the Great Northern Restaurant in July of 2017. After dinner, we performed an entire lobby show together to enthusiastic applause.

East Glacier’s own resident vocalist McKenzie Sherburne, a dynamic performer who sings and performs in various shows in New York, has been a regular performer with me at GPL over the years. Emma Hagan, a local girl, is an alto who plays guitar and sings with a warm endearing tone. Emma still returns now and then to sing for the guests.

Guests have been known to occasionally share their talents in the lobby shows. They have freely offered musical samplings of everything from Beethoven to the Beatles and beyond. I especially remember Todd Gray, a trumpet player from San Francisco, who joined me one night in 2017 and played a great version of “What a Wonderful World.”

The continuing musical tradition at Glacier Park Lodge is perhaps richer than many people realize. It has been an honor and a privilege

for me to return to East Glacier each summer to make music for the guests in the historic lodge, not only as a soloist, but also as an accompanist for others. The performers I’ve mentioned are just a handful of the many talented people who have shared their musicianship with the guests and graced the “stage” that is the lobby of Glacier Park Lodge. What a joy it is to perform and to share that “stage” with so many other gracious musicians who freely give

their time and talents to enhance the Glacier Park experience for all the guests. Thank you, Mr. Tippet, for opening this musical door so many years ago to me and to so many others. And thank you, Nicole Smith and Ron Cadrette, for keeping the door open and the music going for so many years since. May the musical tradition in Glacier Park continue into the future for the enjoyment of everyone.

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*What a joy it is to perform and to share that “stage” with so many other gracious musicians who freely give their time and talents to enhance the Glacier Park experience for all the guests.*

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*Mike “Rhinestone” Rihner with Ian Tippet and Roger Stephens during a 2006 visit by the Stephens family.*

# Glacier Park Oddities and Idiosyncrasies of the 1960s

*By Mac Willemssen (Swiftcurrent 1967, Many Glacier 1968-70)*

During the summer of 2017, my wife and I spent a night at Glacier Park Lodge. One of the desk clerks printed our airline boarding passes at the front desk. After thanking her, I showed her a photo on my iPhone from the summer of 1967. The photo showed Miss Swiftcurrent, Claudia Hanson, and her escort, me, on a stage built on top of the giant log tables in the GPL lobby. You could see the exact place the desk clerk and I were standing. To my surprise, her reaction had nothing to do with the sameness of the GPL front desk; rather, she was shocked by the idea that that there used to be a Miss Glacier Park Pageant ... and that the 19-year old blond-haired escort was now a 69-year old geezer with grey hair.

I then told her about the Many Glacier-GPL football games. Those were almost as strange to her as the thought of a beauty pageant. Who would ever come to work in Glacier National Park and then do things like beauty pageants and football games? It was a great question for which there was really no good answer.

I spent the summer of 1966 working at an upscale boys' camp in Maine. It was fun and a great experience for a small-town Iowa boy. Two of my hometown friends had spent the summer of 1966 working in the camp store at Swiftcurrent. They had great stories, great photos and great adventures. Above all, they had mountains and girls.

Mr. Tippet hired me to be a houseman at Swiftcurrent for the summer of 1967. It was a good job and Swiftly was a great place to work, other

than that we Swifties felt like rubes compared to the sophisticated Many Glacier emps. We were literally and figuratively at the end of the road.

I got to know some Many emps. They had a flag football team for the annual GPL-MGH football game. The MGH captains asked me to bring a team to the upper parking lot for a scrimmage game. It ended in a 0-0 tie and I was asked to become a ringer for Mr. Tippet's Choirboys.

In hindsight, we were a bunch of numbskulls, playing football on an asphalt parking lot with the sidelines being curbs. You never wanted to fall, so you developed a great sense of balance. When we got to GPL for the game on the front lawn, the green grass felt heaven-sent. We started off with a kickoff return for a touchdown, only to have GPL eventually win the game. This lit the fire for payback the next two summers.

In 1968, MGH won 41-7. Mr. Tippet, our "coach", was excited about the victory. He treated the entire team and all our lederhosen-clad cheerleaders to a steak dinner in the Many Glacier Dining Room. In 1969, MGH won again. This time Mr. Tippet was too impatient to wait for the victory dinner. After our win, he called Chef Wilson and told him to get steaks, baked potatoes, relishes-to-be-passed and pie ala mode ready for us upon our return. That was probably the best meal ever served in the Many Glacier employees' cafeteria.

I also became a budding capitalist in 1969. In addition to designing and selling Glacier National Park "Staff" t-shirts, I also designed and sold red Many Glacier football t-shirts. I felt like Scrooge McDuck, buying the

t-shirts for \$1.00 and selling them for \$3.00.

Our football revelry came to an abrupt end in 1970. I was president of the Many Glacier Employee Council. In that capacity, I received a letter from Al Donau, the GPI general manager. Mr. Donau summarily cancelled the football games. The stated reason was a risk of injury; the reason suspected by Mr. Tippet was GPL's fear of losing. I wrote a pleading letter, offering parental releases for all the players, but my advocacy proved futile. The football games became odd and idiosyncratic pieces of Glacier history.

The pageants now look even more strange and dated from the vantage point of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In the 1960s, and for years preceding that decade, they were a big deal. Each of the GPI locations, plus the jammers, all had their own pageants to decide who was going to be Miss Rising Sun, Miss Prince of Wales, Miss Lake McDonald, Miss Glacier Park Lodge, Miss Many Glacier, Miss Swiftcurrent and Miss Jammer.

I was asked by Claudia Hanson, Swiftcurrent's "Miss Camp Store" (a title that is definitely resume material) to be her escort. Claudia was promoted from Miss Camp Store to Miss Swiftcurrent. When it came time for the Miss Glacier Park Pageant, she and I rode a red bus to GPL on the Saturday of the Pageant.

Let's just say it was a lot easier being an escort than a contestant. The pageant contestants had to practice their routines, meet the judges, do a lot of smiling, get their hair done and look good in doing so. We escorts spent about ten minutes with one of ladies in charge who told us what we should

## Pageants Football & Cheerleaders



and shouldn't do. The essence of our lesson was don't pick your nose, don't look stupid and don't be dorky. After those valuable instructions, we had all day to go to the swimming pool, drink beer and get sun tans. I'm happy to say I didn't pick my nose; I'm not so sure about stupid and dorky.

I got to reprise my role as an escort for Judy Shoup (who later became Judy Willemsen) in the 1969 and 1970 Miss Many Glacier Pageants, which I think were the last years for the pageants in Glacier. I will get in trouble with my wife for writing this, but I want to pass along the story of Judy's "sportswear" choice. That was one of the parts of the pageants, along with talent, formalwear and, later for the finalists, the dreaded oral questions ... with everyone hoping to get in a good word for world peace and helping blind children.

Most contestants in the "sportswear" part of the pageant would wear some type of shorts, shoes and a jacket or wrap. Judy had a great tan and sun-blond hair, so after her wrap was described, she peeled it off to show her "sportswear" was an orange bikini. There was an audible gasp from the audience, but she looked just great ... and was ahead of the Miss USA and Miss Universe pageants by 30 years.

We still have one of the judge's scorecards which he gave Judy after the pageant. He praised her singing voice, but the bikini might have been a little too much (or too little?) for him. He wrote, "Be sure to honor your mother and father and walk in the ways of the Lord".

I now look back from the vantage point of 50 years and realize the 2017 GPL desk clerk was right. When you work in Glacier you have mountains, hiking, climbing, natural beauty, great friends and fun. Who really needs oddities and idiosyncrasies like football and beauty pageants?

# Hitchhiking & Hiking in the 1940s

By Richard 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 backcountry 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

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

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*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 backcountry came just after the days when large numbers of people still rode horses.*

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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 backcountry 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

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 eventually were cleared away as a menace to car travellers, but the

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*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.*

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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

grizzlies increased in numbers and too often threatened, maimed, and killed hikers on the trails and campgrounds of the Park.

## **Hitchhiking**

But back to the adventures of the 1940s and 1950s. Many Glacier has always been the hub of a network of



Photo courtesy of the Ray Djuff collection.

*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.*

the best hiking trails and climbing approaches in the Park. We could have been kept busy exploring that area without ever having to travel anywhere by car. However, we wanted to try exciting expeditions all over Glacier, and this meant hitchhiking. Anyone who has thumbed rides as extensively as the employees did then will have plenty of interesting stories about hitchhiking; and this is as good a place as any to discuss that part of our Glacier adventures.

Hitchhiking is one of the least dependable ways of travelling, and since we knew we would be automatically fired if we did not get back in time for work, we experienced many an hour of anxiety out on the road at the end of a day. The need to catch a ride sometimes led us practically to run as we got toward the end of long hikes in the interior and saw the time was

getting short. Uncertainty about lifts added an extra edge to the adventure, and we would laugh in relief about various kinds of close calls once we got back to the hotel.

Except for one occasion, a great blizzard in July of 1948 that was counted as an adequate excuse for not getting back to home base on time, my companions of the road and I always managed to catch rides when we needed them most. We were willing to risk the uncertainties of hitchhiking, but sometimes that part of our trips was quite worrisome until it was all safely over. Several times salvation came just in the nick of time, a sort of miracle at the moment of despair after hours of no luck on a little-travelled road.

One of the most difficult places to get a ride toward nightfall was the stretch of road from the Babb turnoff

to Many Glacier, because the traffic was so very sparse there. The only comforting thing about that location was that you could hike the twelve miles to the hotel if you had to. The biggest tensions, though, came if the hour was getting late and you were hitchhiking back from the Waterton area in Canada. The border closed at 10:00 o'clock or maybe earlier then, and if you did not get a ride through the checking station by that time you were lost. I recall sweating that one out more than once, but we always managed to get lucky.

Occasionally a humane ranger, perhaps recognizing you, would give you the critical lift if you were stranded somewhere, although I think this was against Park policy. I recall being rescued by a ranger when I was pretty much trapped at dusk on the highway way down near Lake McDonald. Providentially, he was heading to Many Glacier to give a talk or nature tour of some kind.

Remembering what a relief it was to get a ride in those days, I have made it a policy to pick up backpackers and employee hitchhikers whenever there is any room at all in the car during these last twenty summers at Glacier. It is enjoyable to talk with them, find out where they come from, and where they have been in the Park; and it is a salute to the good-hearted souls who gave us rides a couple generations earlier.

### **Salt of the Earth**

Once in the 1940s I was heading to Canada, and an antique Chevy or Ford, the kind with running boards on the sides and a spare tire perched on the back, stopped to give me a lift. A gentle old Montana couple said they thought they had room for me in their packed back seat. They told me to move a valise out of the way in order to make a place to sit. (That was the



archaic word they used: “valise”.)

It turned out that they were elderly Mormons making the great pilgrimage of their lives, to the Temple in Cardston. I was impressed with their complete serenity. They told me they had waited twenty years to make this trip, and that in order to be permitted into the Temple they had to bring their “Recommend.” It was the first time I had heard that old-fashioned term, and the elderly gentleman explained simply that you had to live right for many years in order to get one. The couple were both dressed in humble, spotless clothes, he in a blue shirt and suspenders, she wearing a

Illustration credit:  
(1920's cartoon,  
Ray Djuff collection.



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*They were the picture of the good, salt-of-the-earth rural Americans of the olden days. I have always remembered how fine, almost holy, they were as they calmly moved toward their Jerusalem.*

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straw hat with cherries. They were the picture of the good, salt-of-the-earth rural Americans of the olden days. I have always remembered how fine, almost holy, they were as they calmly moved toward their Jerusalem.

### **A Roadside Bear**

Another time I was given a ride over Logan Pass in a very big luxury automobile. The driver was a jolly man with a big stomach, who liked to talk. Part way down on the other side of the Pass he spotted a beggar bear along the road and made an exclamation of interest. “Hey, look at that!” he cried out, “A bear!” He screeched on the brakes and backed up the big boat parallel to the beast. The bear reared on its hind feet and pressed its nose against the window.

The driver was charmed. “Have you got anything to feed him?” he chuckled. Heedless of my warnings he rolled down the window! In no time the bear had its head inside, right next to the driver’s throat. This caused him to stiffen up with fear, and he released the brake and started to inch the car forward. Thereupon the bear, walking sideways, put one of its great paws in squarely on the driver’s huge stomach, squashing it down like a pillow against

his backbone. This was a dreadful emergency, for it looked as if the bear were about to crawl completely in.

The man’s face was now drained white, and his eyes bulged. “Can you do something?” he gurgled in a frozen, strangled voice. I grabbed a sandwich out of my lunch bag, and uttering as much of a prayer as a free-thinker could, I tossed it at the small triangular space in the window that was not filled by the bear. Miraculously, the sandwich shot outside, and the bear pulled itself back immediately to lope after it.

The instant that happened the shaken man’s stomach almost audibly popped back out to the steering wheel where it had been before. Without a word he frenetically wound up the window and then floored the gas pedal. For the rest of the trip he did not utter a syllable, but he kept his eyes glued on the road, perspiration dripping down on his white-knuckled hands. His face had changed from chalk white to bright red, and he was breathing heavily.

I too was scared out of all small talk. After about twenty minutes he wordlessly stopped the car to let me out at the entry road to Lake McDonald

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*The driver was charmed. “Have you got anything to feed him?” he chuckled. Heedless of my warnings he rolled down the window! In no time the bear had its head inside, right next to the driver’s throat.*

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Hotel.

### **The Browning Rodeo**

On the 4th of July of 1948 I hitchhiked with some other employees down to Browning for the annual Indian rodeo. A Blackfeet family gave us a ride back in the box of a truck, and they stopped like a generous public conveyance to pick up all the other employees who were hitchhiking along the road. By the time we pulled into St. Mary there were fourteen employees and seven little children piled into the back of the truck, a total of twenty-one.

The rodeos at Browning were the best I ever saw, and I went to them every year I could. The participants were suicidally brave and reckless. There was a small grandstand, but its occupants sometimes threw out firecrackers that did not clear all the rows of seats. It was far better simply to lean right up against the rail fence of the corral, or sit on it, and get a thrilling ring-side view of the carnage. We would move back when the violent action got too close. At one of those rodeos a particularly ferocious Brahma bull got completely out of control, bellowing and bucking and trying to gore everything in sight with his massive head. Blinded by rage he crashed into the fence, and then with a terrible roar he splintered the top rail and jumped over it right into the crowd. They scattered for their lives in all directions.

At the Blackfeet rodeos the most memorable and impressive experience for me was seeing the immensely ancient braves, dressed in their brilliant finery and set out on blankets where

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*They looked as magnificent and colorful as they appear in Winold Reiss's paintings.*

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they could lean against the corral posts and take the sun and doze. Several were famous warriors nearly a hundred years old who had participated in buffalo hunts, fought pitched battles with enemy tribes, and stolen horses. Many of them were bent over and feeble with age and some were blind.

I was struck by their air of great dignity, wisdom, and solemnity as the sun emphasized the pure white of their braided hair, their deeply wrinkled brown faces, their craggy features, and the brilliance of their beaded and feathered regalia. They looked as magnificent and colorful as they appear in Winold Reiss's paintings. In them we were seeing the closing of an era in history. They were the very last Blackfeet warriors still alive who had lived the traditional warlike and independent life of the plains Indians. Their daily lives, customs, religion, warfare, and hunts were described in the works of James Willard Schultz (Apekkunny) who had lived among them as an Indian and was still alive himself in the 1940s.

### **A Battered Boyfriend**

Although most of our hitchhiking was to get to a trailhead or back, we all made sure to see what the other hotel facilities were like at the Entrance (Glacier Park Lodge), Lake McDonald, Two Medicine, the old Going-to-the-Sun Chalets high above the lake before they were torn down, and the Prince of Wales Hotel in Canada. The Waterton townsite, with its gift shops and pubs, was a favorite destination,

and the more adventurous employees made it up to Lethbridge and even Calgary. Others of us ventured in the opposite direction too, over Logan Pass toward Flathead Lake to Kalispell, which was a most appealing Montana town.

My memory of hitchhiking in the Park in those days is a sort of cumulative fused image of standing with friends along a road urgently holding our thumbs out, sometimes making imploring gestures, bounding gleefully to the vehicles when they stopped for us, spending many hours sitting, waiting, worrying, talking, and sometimes playing word games like Ghost.

Only an occasional episode stands out, if something really unusual happened. This was the case when I was hitchhiking back from the Waterton townsite with a fellow and his pretty, spirited girlfriend. We did not have much luck for a long time, and they got into an argument about something. To my amazement she starting socking and kicking him, landing some very audible hard punches on his face and kicks on his legs. In my non-violent life I had never yet seen such fierce fisticuffs visited by one person upon another, and the one who was doing it was a fine-boned, lithe girl! I was startled. He was quite a good sport about it, and they continued to go together afterward.

### **Friends, Gear 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 after World War II, or even before the war. We shared the powerful temptation always

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*The rodeos at Browning were the best I ever saw, and I went to them every year I could. The participants were suicidally brave and reckless.*

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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.

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

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*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.*

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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

*Credit: (Glacier Park brochure, Ray Djuff collection.)*

*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.*



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 side of the Park it could be all socked 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 slogging 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.



Photo courtesy of the Ray Djuff collection.

*I have made it a policy to pick up backpackers and employee hitchhikers whenever there is any room at all in the car... It is enjoyable to talk with them; and a salute to the good-hearted souls who gave us rides a couple generations earlier.*

# A Gearjammer's Return

By McNeil Seymour (St. Mary 1953, Gearjammer 1956)

Over 50 years ago, two high school friends from St. Paul and I were employed one summer for Hugh and Margaret Black as filling station attendants at St. Mary. Several years later, another friend and I worked for the summer as “gearjammers” for the Great Northern Railway.

On both of those occasions I took the Great Northern train from St. Paul to East Glacier Park at the beginning of the summer and returned on the train at the end of the summer. Most of the passengers on the outgoing trains did not know many other passengers, and the trains were relatively quiet. On the return trip, however, the passengers had formed Glacier friendships, and the atmosphere on the trains was loud and noisy with little opportunity for sleep.

On one of those train trips back to Minnesota, a jammer's deception was detected. The passengers included two girls who had worked at different hotels. Both unknowingly had dated the same jammer, depending on where he was stationed for the night. One of the two girls happened to mention to the other girl her bus driver boyfriend, and they then realized that they had the same boyfriend! That was the end of both relationships. I understand that the gearjammers generally now are stationed every night at one home location, which means that the “girl in every port” scenario is less possible.

Since the 50's, I had revisited the Park on four occasions, but never by train. In 2018, however, my son Neil was willing to join me on a trip to Glacier from the newly-refurbished Union Station in St. Paul. I reserved a sleeper on the train leaving on a late August evening. We arrived in East Glacier about 24 hours later. The trip was enjoyable, the scenery was interesting (particu-

larly in Montana where we travelled in the daylight hours), and the food was good. The sleeper made the trip much more comfortable and enjoyable.

Neil and I stayed for four nights in Glacier: two nights at Rising Sun and two nights at Many Glacier Hotel. Our choices were limited, because of the Howe Ridge Fire in the Lake McDonald area. It not only caused

thinking about the consequences. On arrival at Rising Sun, I found that the hot sun had melted and ruined the baked goods. I received a memorable tongue lashing. (I asked the manager if other gearjammers had made the same mistake. I was pleased to hear that the answer was yes.)

Many Glacier has always been one of my favorite hotels in the world.

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*I understand gearjammers now stationed every night at one home location, which means that the “girl in every port” scenario is less possible.*

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Lake McDonald Lodge to be closed, but also closed traffic on the west side of Going-to-the-Sun Road.

On our first full day in the Park, we were picked up at Rising Sun by a red bus driven by a jammer named Paul. He drove us to Logan Pass and gave us an excellent talk about the Park and related matters, including the receding glaciers. Paul was nice enough to introduce me to his passengers as a former jammer and to give me an opportunity to comment. Although many of the current drivers are of retirement age, I was pleased to learn that Paul was 22, or about the same age as I when I was a gearjammer.

Paul was far more versatile than I had been. Two days later, when Neil and I were in our room at Many Glacier, we heard pleasant music from the lobby. We sought out the source, and there was Paul playing a guitar with lyrics and commentary, and with a crowd surrounding him. We were impressed.

While at Rising Sun, I told the manager about an episode many years ago. On a trip from Lake McDonald to Many Glacier, I was entrusted with pies and other baked goods to drop off at Rising Sun. En route, I rolled back the canvas top on my bus without

After two days at Rising Sun and its panoramic view of St. Mary Lake, we drove to Many. We noted on the way that the former Babb Bar has been transformed into something much larger and more respectable.

At Many Glacier, we found the lobby filled with people looking for bears. Some claimed to have seen a grizzly and two cubs on a nearby mountain with their naked eyes. Others needed binoculars to see them, and others like me could not locate them with or without binoculars. That afternoon, when we walked the trail around Swiftcurrent Lake, we thought that we saw bear scat. As Neil and I were walking along the trail about a mile from the Lodge, a ranger approached to tell us that a bear and two cubs had been seen and that we should be careful. After the ranger left, and about 100 yards farther down the trail, a person told us that he had seen a bear and two cubs at a close distance. That was enough for me, and we headed back to the lodge.

The next day we returned by train to St. Paul. I was sad to leave. One of my college songs includes the line: “It is the best old place of all.” I hope to be back again next year.

# Glacier Park Lodge Memories

*By Jay Brain (Glacier Park Lodge 1966-69)*

This picture, taken in June 2018, is of former employees of Glacier Park Lodge who worked there in the late 1960s (plus a spouse or two that were acquired in the years since). Glacier has that magnetic effect on you – one visit is not enough, you have to return. There is no way to see everything the Park has to offer in one visit. Back in the 1960s there were approximately 150 employees at Glacier Park Lodge, most of whom were college students from all over the United States. We were all hired by filling out a paper application, attaching a photo and mailing it to Mr. Ian B. Tippet at Glacier Park, Inc. in Arizona. He was smart enough to hire all of us; each of us worked in Glacier at least two years and some four years.

Each of us had revisited the Park a few times over the years individually. In July 2013, Glacier Park Lodge had a reunion to celebrate its 100th anniversary. We all attended and reunited with our fellow former employees and friends. Strong bonds were formed when we all worked there because we were together pretty much 24/7. We worked together, played together, and lived in the dorms and ate in the employee cafeteria together. The key word is “together,” and we became like family.

Glacier is a special and magical place; those strong bonds and friendships that were formed made Glacier even more special to all of us because of the memories we all have. There was no TV, no cell phones (calls back

home had long distance charges so not many were made), no computers, no internet – and we were not allowed to have cars. We watched the first landing on the moon in the Lodge bar in 1969 on a small 12 inch black and white TV with tin foil on the rabbit ears that someone brought to the Lodge from East Glacier. Truthfully, we did not see much but “snow” on the screen. The news we got was by newspaper and radio signals were pretty weak and non-existent most times.

So what did we do? We worked and looked forward to our days off. We hiked, we camped overnight when possible, we climbed mountains, fished, rafted, hopped freight trains from East Glacier to either Whitefish or Cut Bank (nothing more exhilarating than sitting on top of a boxcar riding through the mountains), hitchhiked everywhere we went in the Park since we had no cars, had Pow-Wows (campfire, guitars and singing)

behind the Lodge, rappelled down the laundry wall, had water fights on the front lawn when we got the hoses out for the monthly fire drill, had a rivalry football game each summer against Many Glacier employees, went to Bison Creek Ranch occasionally for a steak dinner when we could afford it and found ways to travel to Waterton, the Calgary Stampede, and Banff, Lake Louise and Jasper in the Canadian Rockies. The Lodge had a Miss Glacier Park Lodge pageant each summer and a Christmas in July party with a decorated Christmas tree in the lobby. We even managed to have dances in the employee cafeteria a few times a summer.

It's safe to say that our summers at Glacier were some of the best and most memorable times in all of our lives. Thank you Mr. Tippet, for bringing all of us together. True friendship never dies. We are returning to Glacier again in 2019 to create some more memories together.



*Avalanche Lake, June 2018. From left to right, East Glacier Lodge Employees from 1965-71: Teresa Cooksey, P.J. Gardner, Penny Boelins, Adele Cox & daughter, Jay Brain, and Terry Tucker. (Photo courtesy of Teresa Cooksey.)*

# Because of a Reunion

By Patricia Wykstra Johnson  
(Glacier Park Lodge 1967)

A girl never forgets her first kiss. Mine was in July 1962. I was 15 and vacationing in Glacier National Park. Richard was working at the Village Inn on Lake McDonald where my parents and I always stayed. After a summer romance week, I returned to Kentucky. At the end of the summer, Richard returned to Missoula. We corresponded for three years until he wrote in 1965 that he was getting married.

When my parents and I visited Glacier in the late 1950s and early 1960s, we used to pick up college student hitchhikers. Finally, I was a college student and could apply to work in the Park. I received that special letter from Mr. Tippet and was assigned to Reservations at Glacier Park Lodge for the summer of 1967.

Fast forward to 2012. I am notified of a July 2013 reunion of Glacier Park Lodge employees to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Lodge. I make plans to visit friends in Whitefish, attend the reunion, and see Banff, Lake Louise, and Jasper again.

Fifty years have passed since that first kiss. However, when I think of Glacier, I always remember 1962. The internet now exists and I find Richard in the White Pages living in his hometown of Missoula. I send him a note. He writes back that he remembers me, wants to see me, and has no wife. We catch up by email over the next several months and meet again in July 2013.

We share a kiss in the same spot under a now very old Village Inn tree. I see the family Lake McDonald cabin

that I first visited in 1962. He drives Going-to-the-Sun while I take photos. Logan Pass parking is full, so we picnic at St. Mary's. Richard attends the GPL Reunion and meets my 1967 roommate and her husband. We listen to amazing lectures and explore Glacier again.

Since our reunion in 2013, we emailed or talked almost every day. Once or twice a year, I flew from North Carolina to Missoula. We explored the Park and Montana, attended festivals and concerts, rode his motorcycle, toured other national parks, went to his fraternity brothers' gatherings, played dominoes with friends, or just sat on the deck of his cabin absorbing the beauty of Lake McDonald.

Richard became a lifetime member of the Glacier Park Foundation. He loved everything about Glacier National Park and devoured each publication of *The Inside Trail*. Sadly and unexpectedly, Richard was felled by a heart attack working in his Missoula yard this winter.

The spark of a first kiss only improves with time. My heart hurts, but I have many happy memories. If the Glacier Park Lodge Reunion had never happened, I would never have found Richard again, and had those six years of fun and adventures. RIP, Richard Lee Alderson, September 1945—February 2019.

If the Glacier  
Park Lodge  
Reunion  
had never  
happened ...





## **Audience in the lobby of Glacier Park Lodge**

This photo is a tribute to the people who have supported the Glacier Park Hotel musical efforts over the decades.

## **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.

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