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MRNPA NEWS

From the Summit

by John Titland, President, MRNPA

It is early January 1997. As I write this, people up and down the Pacific Coast are assessing the damage caused by the post-Christmas blizzards, ice storms, and flooding. Every day the damage toll rises. What about the Park? "So far" the only impact around Mount Rainier has been record accumulations of snow. Storm damage has been minimal. For awhile there was some concern that snow on the roof at the Jackson Visitor Center at Paradise might cause it to collapse, but it held. Avalanche danger is and will remain high throughout the Park because the heavy, wet snow was deposited on top of a windpacked base. There will be some

(Continued on page 2)

Grin and Bear It! The Longmire Bears

[ED note: We're not sure of the year this happened, but it has been within the last couple decades because Stan Schlegel is mentioned, and he just retired a couple years ago.]

Bear trapping was in vogue this summer at Longmire. To the chagrin of area residents the odors emanating from trash cans, recycling garages and campgrounds were insuppressible and still very alluring to bears at Mount Rainier.

One little black bear with a big brown splotch on his back and a white tag (from a previous trapping) in the right ear made Longmire his 'home away from home.' It was pleasant to see him around for a while but his trash can rattling, litter strewing and garage burglaries soon put a damper on his welcome. With little trouble the first trapping took place with the expertise from Rangers Thompson and Loehr and a big old soup bone from the Derr kitchen. The little fellow was hauled to the junction of the South Puyallup River and the West Side Road (14 miles) and

gingerly set free.

A day and a half later he was back.

An aptitude to forgive led the West District staff to tolerate the little rascal for a while but the trap was soon reset. Resource Management Specialist Schlegel lent assistance with his giant jar of peanut butter which

(Continued on page 2)

In This Issue:

The Longmire Bears	1
Animal Comments from the Past	3
Bearing with Bears	3
Seventy Years ago...	5
Mountain Climbing in 1907	6
Book Reviews	8
Membership renewals	10

(From the Summit - continued from page 1)

potential for avalanche damage on into the spring. But more damage is not what the Park needs! Work has not yet been completed repairing the damage from last winter's storms.

So, what does 1997 hold in store? Too many things! The Park must make a decision on what to do about the damage to the Carbon River Road. Design proposals for rebuilding the section of Highway 410 between Chinook Pass and Cayuse Pass will soon be released for public review. Work will begin this summer on replacing the building at Paradise known as the "Ski Dorm". Also work will continue on refurbishing the roof on the Jackson Visitor Center. Repair of the washout on Highway 123 between Cayuse Pass and Ohanapecosh must be completed. In the early spring, the next phase of the General Management Plan will be released for public comment. And, I am sure there are two or three more projects that I don't know about or don't remember right now that will be ongoing in 1997.

After reviewing the preceding list, I asked myself "Is Mount Rainier a National Park or a big public works project?" That's sort of the central question, isn't it? How much or how little is required to make a National Park--or any park? Will we accept less? Do we want more? How much should be spent to repair something that's already there when it wears out or is damaged?

These are some of the questions I hope to have the Board of Trustees discuss at our next few meetings. If you are interested in joining these discussions, give me a call and I will make sure you get invited to upcoming Board meetings. If you are not quite up to such philosophical discussions, how about applying some physical labor? The 1997 work parties have been scheduled for May 17, the weekend of August 16-17, and September 13.

Again, if you are interested give me a call and I will make sure you get invited. I expect 1997 to be a busy year. There is always a place for people interested in participating.

(Continued from page 1)

eventually led to the second capture on July 26. This time the vagrant was hauled to Klapatche Point on the West Side Road (19 miles).

Three days later he was back.

The traps were set again. This time his escapades included:

...eating thirty pounds of apples in Chapman's garage;

...tearing the hasp and wooden siding from two garages;

...trying to break into the bear trap after Resource Management Specialist Schlegel closed it on his way to lunch;

...staring down several visitors in front of the National Park Inn, Longmire.

On October 28, the young varmint was caught by Rangers Carlson and Loehr and trailered to Cayuse Pass. The last glimpse was of a furry rump on the

(Continued on page 3)

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The opinions expressed in the MRNPA News are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the MRNPA.

Letters and articles from members and readers are welcomed.

We reserve the right to edit for length, grammar or libel.

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(Continued from page 2)

east side of the Cascade Crest traveling at high speed.

The population of Longmire, Washington has been reduced by one.

Animal Comments from Times Past

1905 - Annual Report. Secretary of the Interior's report on wildlife in the Park.

"Black bear, deer, cougar and wildcats are fairly plentiful in the valleys, though they are seldom seen on account of the density of the underbrush. Wolverine, martins and fisher also abound. Beaver and otter have been exterminated. The number of mountain goats appears to have slowly diminished. Few of these animals have been shot recently in the mountains adjacent to the reservation, and probably none within its limits. Yet it is feared that this interesting animal will soon no longer be seen in the vicinity of Mount Rainier.

The wolves and cougars have increased within the last few years, and it is probably that they are the cause of the disappearance of the goat. It is possible that the number of cougars could be reduced if they were systematically hunted by the rangers. There are a few elk in the park about the headwaters of the Puyallup River and an increasing number of marmots in Paradise Valley."

1912. "The Superintendent mentioned for the first time, the employment of paid hunters for killing and trapping predators within the park."

1914. "Rangers trapped two cougars, two wildcats and 25 martin over the winter. Elk were reported on the east side of the park."

1915-16. "Large mammals were reported on the increase. Deer were plentiful, one hundred mountain goats were seen in a single band and bear, for the first time, were causing serious damage to construction camps."

1926. "Due to the trapping of predators by the government hunters of the U. S. Biological Survey, only an occasional cougar was seen."

1977. "Thank goodness, several cougar were seen in the park. The early managers were working with the

best scientific guesses of their day in management. So are we. Could our scientific basis be as far off in the future too?"

from "Mountain Memories," V. 1 #1, Dec. 1977, a newsletter for former employees

Bearing with the Bears

"Where can I see a bear?" is still one of the most frequently asked questions at Mount Rainier. Throughout the history of the park, seeing wild animals in their natural setting has always fascinated visitors. However bears and people do not mix well, and many a tale has resulted from the visitor's affection for bears, the bear's love of human food, and the Park Service's and the concession's desire to keep the bears and the people from hurting each other.

"Early in the century, when bears started causing problems, the solutions tried were direct and simple. In his book, *Recollections by the Old Man of the Mountain*, Paul Sceva talks of a bear that kept breaking into the kitchen of the Paradise Inn. First Sceva tried pounding horseshoe nails through planks to create barbed bars for the kitchen window. When the bear simply pried the boards off anyway, the next step was to set up a soup pot wired to shock the bear, using "juice" provided by a six volt battery rigged to a coil from a Model T. Ford. It took a couple of tries for the bear to become fully convinced that the soup was not worth the shock, but once convinced, he never tried to raid the kitchen again.

"As the number of visitors increased, the next step in controlling the bear-visitor problem was to provide safe places where the bears could be watched.

"Sceva related that, in the days when the Inn was burying its garbage in trenches 'near the public campground', busloads of visitors were brought down to see the bears scrounging in the garbage.

"The trip to the 'bear pits' was made each evening, and was advertised with a large sign that stated, "Fare \$1.00 round trip. No bear; No fare." Sceva did not mention what year the bus trips were offered.

"Next the Park Service apparently experimented with the idea of feeding the bears at one specific

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 3)

trolled site. In the August 8-15, 1931 issue of the Rainier National Park News, is an item stating that, 'A bear feeding pit is being constructed at Paradise in the valley between the Community House and the horse barns. Here the bears will be fed daily and may be watched by visitors without danger of being scratched or bitten as is the risk of feeding them by hand, a practice frowned on by the Park Service.'

"In 1934, E. A. Kitchin, the "resident wildlife technician" began his work to "restore the wild animals to their balance established before white man entered the area", using Emergency Conservation Works money.

"The study led to recommendations intended to 'direct the animals and birds back to their natural mode of living and away from artificial feeding.'

"By the time the 1941 report on Wildlife Conditions in the National Parks was published, the park and the concession were trying to wean the bears from visitor's food and from garbage. The report states that 'most sources of artificial food available to bears were removed and 50 storage lockers were installed in the campgrounds to protect camper's food.'

"An electric fence was used to discourage bears from trying to break into the mess hall of the road contractor's camp in Stevens Canyon.

"Today bears are seldom seen in the park. In fact, Cougar Rock campground is about the only area in the park that still has bear problems, mostly because of campers leaving food on picnic tables or deliberately feeding the bears. The campground storage lockers have disappeared. [ED note: The bears probably hauled them off!] Bear-proof garbage cans (with welded steel covers and massive concrete bases), and better understanding by visitors of the problems that feeding bears can cause, have made campground foraging expeditions unprofitable for the bears. Still, each evening program begins with a warning not to feed the bears and keep all food locked out of sight in the trunk of the car whenever



"What I used to look like when I had a nose..."

away from camp.

"A truce has been established. Occasional skirmishes still break the peace, but on the whole, Mount Rainier is bearing with the bears pretty well."

Mountain Memories, December 1978

Camping Alert

In case anyone is considering doing some camping this summer, please note the following public-service announcement:

In Alaska, tourists are warned to wear tiny bells on their clothing when hiking in bear country. The bells warn away MOST bears.

Tourists are also cautioned to watch the ground on the trail, paying particular attention to bear droppings to be alert for the presence of Grizzly Bears. One can tell a Grizzly dropping because it has tiny bells in it.

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

Seventy One Years Ago this Month

Lowest temperature in History of National Park Sends Thousands of Wild Denizens to Lower Levels: Husky Dogs Chase Deer

(Tacoma News Tribune, January 12, 1925)

Thousands of wild inhabitants of Mount Tacoma National Park were disclosed during the coldest weather in the history of the park, according to the monthly *Nature Notes* issued by the Mount Tacoma nature guide service. Early in the morning of December 18, the mercury was 18 degrees below zero in Paradise Valley and 6 degrees below at Longmire.

Dan Kakisenoruk, the Eskimo dog driver for the hotel's string of "huskies" found considerable interference was caused by the presence of deer and elk, states the bulletin. Whenever big game was seen, the dogs broke from the trail and were only stopped by the dragging down of the sled. On several occasions the dogs were so violent in their attempts to give chase that they broke the harness and deserted the team. Fortunately the deer escaped unhurt every time and the sled pullers came in at the regular feeding time.

It is said that literally thousands of coyote trails were found in the new fallen snow between Carter Falls and Narada Falls December 21. It is ventured that either a great many animals had been there or else each had covered a wide territory. Snow covered logs across the river in a number of places presented the appearances of well beaten trails, and the base of every scrubby tree had been inspected for a possible rabbit or grouse.

During the recent cold snap the coyote

(Continued on page 6)

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CUT OUT AND PLACE IN YOUR DAY PLANNER FOR THOSE TIMES
WHEN YOU WANT TO REGISTER YOUR CONCERNS NOW!

(Continued from page 5)

became bold, tracks having been found within a few feet of the dwellings, under the stables and along the drives before the hotels and offices.

During the last week of December a cougar track was reported near the base of Eagle Peak, the bulletin says, but nothing has been heard since of its maker. Clark's crows, ravens, magpies, gray hays, Stellar jays, chickadees and brown creepers are reported to be the most abundant of the birds at the present time.

The Not-So-Good Old Days

Mountain Climbers Have Half Ton of Food

About Sixty of the Party Will Reach Summit.

All Have Reached Longmire's Springs and Are Making Endurance Trips

[Tacoma Daily News, July 17, 1907] *N e w s*
Service Special, - LONGMIRE SPRINGS, July 17. -
The last contingent of the mountain climbers which includes nearly all of the Mazamas left Longmire this morning and took up the march to Paradise valley. The remainder of the Mazama club's baggage and provisions was hauled up from Ashford yesterday and all was on the ground last night ready for transportation to Paradise this morning.

The Mazamas fared considerably worse than the Sierras and Appalachians after reaching Longmire in the tramp from Ashford which began Saturday. Those who got an early start arrived in Longmire considerably before darkness. The more tardy ones, numbering some seventy or eighty, who wandered along the road at all sorts of time schedules in the late afternoon, had some harrowing experiences before reaching the mineral springs and after.

Rain Falls in Torrents.

Along about 7 o'clock Saturday night the rain began to fall in torrents, and in the downpour more than half a hundred weary wayfarers were caught as far as seven miles from Longmire. The blackest of clouds brought on early and dense darkness and the

journey was made in the most blinding rain. Some of the most persistent pursued their way despite the storm and came in to Longmire at all hours up to and after midnight. Others took to the woods and found shelter in the driest places that could be found under the big trees. Up to 1 o'clock yesterday morning the culinary department of the mountain hostelry was working overtime, by which hour food was furnished to famished travelers to the number of nearly 200.

Shelter in Chicken Coops

The question of sleeping quarters was the most difficult problem to solve. Every available square foot of floor space in the hotel was taken possession of by the tired travelers. Some found places to sleep under the beds occupied by earlier and more fortunate arrivals. Those who couldn't get into the house found shelter in the out buildings. The chickens were driven out of their coops, the horse barn was resorted to as a place of refuge, and some crept under the wagons or wound themselves around the trunks of the trees. The hospitality of those who occupied the dozen tents was extended to a grateful number, but all the comforts available failed to mitigate the discomfort caused by drenched clothing. Yesterday morning the last of those who had taken to the tall timbers arrived at Longmire. The morning skies became somewhat clear, the Sierras and Appalachians to the number of about sixty started early on the route to Paradise valley. Their dunnage bags were loaded on the twenty-two pack animals and they reched their camp in Paradise valley yesterday afternoon. The clear skies in the morning at Longmire failed to continue and before they reached camp the clouds were blackened again by the lowering clouds and a furious storm began to rage. Those who were in charge of the pack animals and who arrived back at Longmire last night reported a terrific storm in the valley.

Hazard Stevens in the Lead.

Today from Longmire General Hazard Stevens and Prof. W. D. Lyman, of Walla Walla, with a party of ten Mazamas went on an expedition to the glacier. The majority of the Sierras and Appalachians remained at Longmire, together with a considerable number of the Mazamas, are on their way to Paradise this morning. By tomorrow night it is expected that

all three clubs will have everybody present in Paradise.

Mazamas Having Hard Luck

The Mazama Club has been particularly unfortunate in the matter of arrangements. Their stores and equipment were late in arriving. Nearly all of their provisions were still to arrive at Ashford when the members of the party reached there. Only half a dozen wagons were available for hauling anything and they were used for transporting the dunnage bags and other personal effects to Longmire.

Sierras Early in the Game.

The Sierras had a strong hold on the forelock of time. They began to haul in their provisions and equipment July 5. A pioneer party of ten was on the ground for that purpose on that day. When the Sierras and their guests, the Appalachians, arrived Saturday the official heads of the advance party reported everything in readiness. Walter J. Burp of Oakland, Cal, is the chief commissary of the Sierras; Alexander Adler of San Francisco his assistant, and E. B. Gould of the same city, superintendent of transportation. They had provided and ready at the Ashford depot for the sustenance of all the mountain climbers a couple of hundred paper bag lunches. In each bag there was contained a piece of cheese, a cross section of bologna sausage, one sweet and four soda crackers, nine dates and a piece of chocolate. There was also issued to each a brand new tin cup with which to drink from the mountain streams. None of those who arrived at Longmire Saturday night or Sunday morning had anything left of their lunches worth mentioning.

Several Tons of Provisions.

The Sierras and Appalachians have a most complete equipment. They have 22 12x14 tents, an assembly tent 50x70 feet and a commissary tent. They have a stationary table 40 feet long and over this is a spread of canvas. They have a complete set of granite tableware and three steel ranges on which to cook an endless variety of edibles. In their commissary tent they have 9,000 pounds of groceries and provisions. A Chinese cook named Charley Tuck, who has been with the Sierras on all their expeditions, occupies the position of chef and he has

two Mongolian assistants.

About Eighty Will Make Summit

William E. Colby of San Francisco, who is chairman of the Sierra club's executive committee, says that probably not more than 70 or 80 will make the ascent.

Several preliminary expeditions will be made to the summits of the mountains of lesser magnitude to try the endurance of the climbers, and none of those who aspire to ascend the snow-capped dome of Mount Tacoma will be allowed to make the undertaking who show signs of a lack of endurance and fortitude. The ascent to the crater will probably be made next Monday.

Cutler's Mount Tacoma Tent

Charles E. Cutler, who is doing special photographic work for the Tacoma Chamber of Commerce, has a large piece of oilcloth on which is painted in formidable letters the legend: "Mount Tacoma or Bust." The display of this sign on the summit, it is said, will be the signal for a battle above the clouds.

J. H. Cameron of the Hamilton National bank of Chicago will join the Mazamas July 22. He is in Portland to attend the bankers' convention. With him will come as his guest Professor Charles E. Fay of Tufts College, Massachusetts.

Mr. and Mr. W. G. Steel, Mazamas from Portland, are expected today. Frank B. Leland of Detroit will arrive to join the Mazamas tomorrow.

[ED Note: Mr. Colby misjudged the capabilities of his group. 112 climbers made the summit, making it the first LARGE group climb. Fifty three Sierra Club people climbed via the Gibraltar Route. One among the party who reached the summit was Stephen Mather, who ten years later became the first director of the National Park Service, and guided it through its formative years.]

While the groups were camped at Paradise, evening campfire talks were given by General Hazard Stephens who had made the pioneer ascent 35 years earlier), J. N. LeConte of the University of California, Henry Landes, State Geologist of Washington, Dr. Marcus Lyon of the Smithsonian and a Swiss guide.]

(Continued on page 8)

Book Reviews: 2 Mt. Rainier books offer lots to like

*by Barbara Lloyd McMichael,
the Bookmonger*

The Big Fact Book About Mount Rainier

Bette Filley

Dunamis House: \$17.95

Mount Rainier National Park:

Tales Trails and Auto Tours

Jerry and Gisiela Rohde

Mountain Home Books: \$17.95

I confess to some concern that two new books on Mount Rainier may inadvertently further the wear and tear on one of America's most beloved national parks, but that is not the central issue here.

"The Big Fact Book about Mount Rainier" by Issaquah author Bette Filley, and "Mount Rainier National Park: Tales, Trails and Auto Tours" by former Washington state resident Gisiela Rohde and her husband, Jerry, (they now live in Northern California) are both well-researched compendiums of natural history, folklore and touring advice.

With two new and identically priced books out on Mount Rainier, which one is for you?

"The Big Fact Book" is a list-lover's dream. Self-proclaimed "Rainierophile" Filley has stuffed 35 years of collected information into more than 400 pages -- the Table of Contents alone is 18 pages! There is information on glaciers, wildflowers, wildlife, park facilities, celebrity visits, UFO visits (1) and commemorative stamps. There are anecdotes from historians about days of yore, and conjecture from volcanologists as to Mount Rainier's future.

The book, which doesn't confine itself to park boundaries, is a good source also for contact information on food, lodging and recreational opportunities in and around the park. It is, as Filley advertises, a smorgasbord.

The Rohde book, graced with nice sketches from Port Ludlow's Larry Eifert, is organized into four

sections. The first part is an overview of human and natural history, with plenty of informative sidebars. The second section suggests a number of car tours, and includes more sidebars to give readers a better idea of the history of the area through which they'll be driving.

By the time they get to the third section, the Rohdes seem to have wearied of the delightful historical detours and use a more straightforward approach. For each of the 25 hikes recommended, they offer a brief rundown of trip highlights, the distance hiked and elevation gain involved, the trailhead location and a description of the hike. The outings vary in distance and degree of difficulty, so everybody will be able to find a suitable outing. Simple maps are provided, although it would be a good idea to procure a more detailed topographical map once you pick your destination.

The final section of this book provides a quick guide to information about park facilities, regulations and schedules. I wish it also included mention of the potentially life-saving "Ten Essentials" that everyone would carry when hiking into wilderness - that should be required content in all hiking manuals.

Filley's "Big Fact Book," though less of a hiking guide than the Rohde's book, does provide that information.

Barbara Lloyd McMichael's Bookmonger column covers the books, authors and publishers of the Pacific Northwest.