

Yellowstone Interpreters' Newsletter

NUMBER 4

Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming

NOVEMBER 1970

Your response to last winter's "Newsletter" was such that we promised to continue contact again this winter. At the Nez Perce Cabin summit meeting, several of you asked for more "news." Well, here it is, for better or for worse.

Labor Day, O' Labor Day, why did you come so late? We had quite a fight to maintain full services until Labor Day. Many seasonals heard school bells ringing several days before the season-ending holiday arrived. By some delicate juggling we lived through 'til September 7, but let's hope that doesn't happen again.

POST SEASON

Weatherwise, the big freeze came and went as "Old Timers" predicted. Temperatures dropped to 20° about September 8 quickly followed by the season's first snow. Then, as if by magic, Indian Summer came to Yellowstone. The last ten days of September were simply magnificent. Clear skies and warm temperatures contrasted beautifully with the golden aspen we all waited to see. That's gone now, of course, as snow-capped mountains ring the plateau. Cold, foggy mornings with frost on the windshield signal a return to winter and lonesome times in Yellowstone.

The Hangers Oners - Post season crowds found Pat Ozment and Kathy Schultz at Old Faithful. Pat Embry, Sheila Helgath and Ted Parkinson shuffled between Canyon, Fishing Bridge and Norris. Thea Thompson moved to Mammoth and a new winter home. Curt Topham learned something about transfers. He has been at Big Hole since September 5. How is the change of pace Curt? Twenty visitors per day -- some change!

The Permanents - The first part of October found the Dunmires making a rapid, unexpected trip to California. Bill's father passed away on September 29. Our condolences, Bill.

Post season means a change of pace and more moving for permanents. Dick and Doug have been seen sneaking through the basement door of the Mammoth Museum bearing brown cardboard burdens. Room "J" is filling with Carousels and lapse dissolve units. Thea Thompson has laid claim to the curator's office upstairs in the museum.

Post season also means vacation time for some. The Morrisons spent a week in Utah while the Douglasses traveled for nearly a month, going all the way to Maine. Second honeymoon, Doug? Stan, Dick and John Whitman have become Nimrods of sorts, bringing home four elk in two weekends. (They must hunt near Gibbon Meadows!) There must be German blood in Stan's family tree - he's planning to make sausage from venison this year.

Post season means training sessions and neighboring park assignments for some lucky chaps. Dick Lake was one of a few Service personnel selected for intensive management training. For a week he joined Elroy Bohlin at Big Hole and is now temporarily assigned to Assistant Superintendent Hennesay's office. He will soon attend a month-long management institute at the University of Montana. In the long run, this means less of Dick's cheery face around Mammoth. Watch it Dick, we might get along without you!

Civil Service instructors conducted a week of training at Mammoth in mid-October. Courses in Management and Labor Union Relations were attended by a variety of Federal agency managers from central Montana. George and Dick each spent some time at Management Institute classes. As the Newsletter goes to press, Bill will be packing his bags for a week-long conference of Natural History Association officials, at Grand Canyon. Don't you have some place to go Stan?

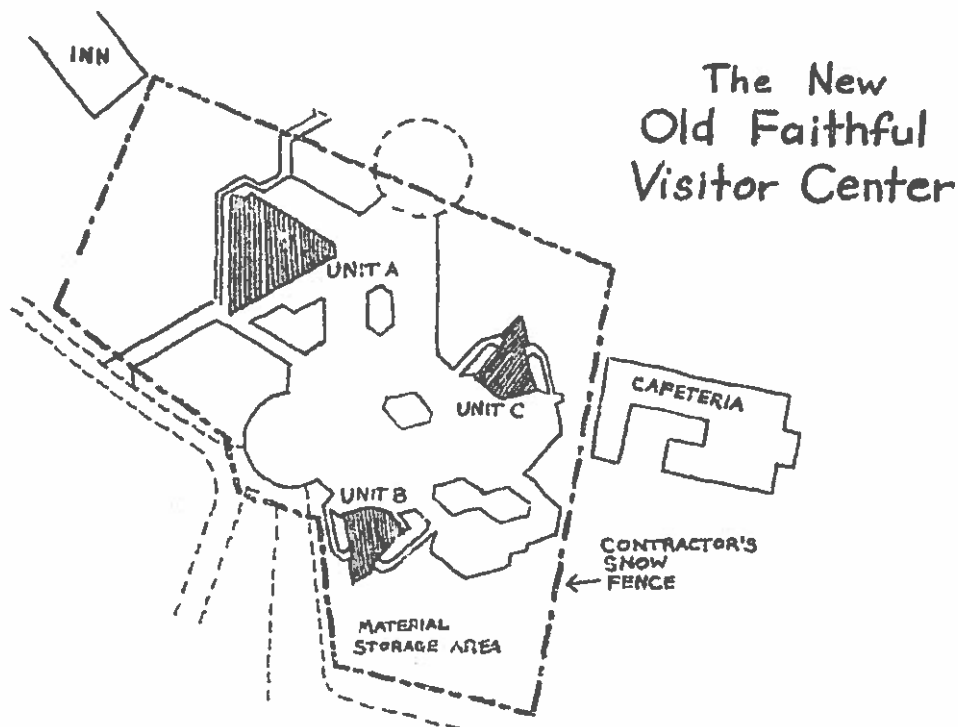
AROUND THE LOOP

Old Faithful bypass road is complete and open to public travel. The circus has begun. Imagine a retired couple spending a week in Yellowstone as they've done for years coming upon a freeway interchange when they thought they were going to Old Faithful. Pat Ozment remarked that a sign leading to the interchange with Madison and West Thumb shown in the same direction really throws them.



Construction of the Old Faithful Visitor Center complex is well under way. The two smaller theaters have walls and roofs completed with some work being done on the interiors. Concrete foundations and some pillars for the main information building have been poured. The roof will be added in the spring.

Currently, visitors are being contacted in a small, temporary building across the street from the old visitor center site. The new station appears successful and will be used through next fall, when the new facilities are scheduled for completion.

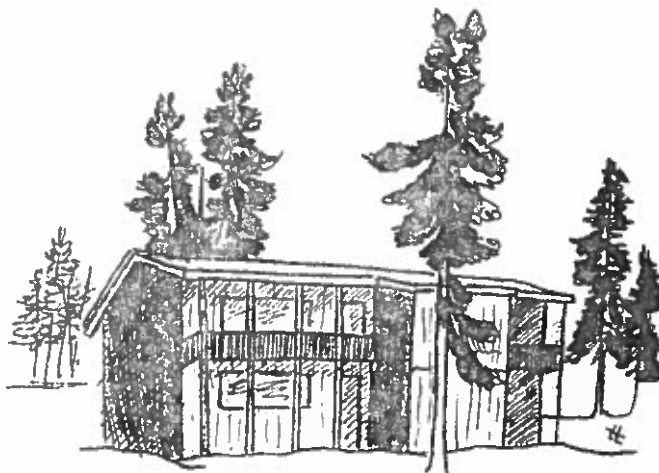


Where have all the cabins gone? About 100 camper cabins, the "Fish Bowl," the "Bull Pen" and "H" and "I" Dorms have all been removed to make way for the new parking lot. When the parking lot is completed, traffic will no longer pass in front of the Inn and Visitor Center. Old Faithful will have a little more breathing space.

The Ranger Division never misses an opportunity to train firemen with a real live burning building. Twelve rubber-coated and rubber-booted firemen sprayed water on each other as the YP Messhall was burned.

Stan and Dick joined the "training session." Did you rescue any sleeping maidens, Dick?

The prefabricated quadriplex you heard about finally arrived. The four packages were lifted into place, bolted together and were ready for occupants in 10 days. You can't beat that for service! The units were delivered with some furnishings in place and carpets on the floors. The thing doesn't look too bad either.



George Marler is still wandering around the geyser basins busily recording his observations in connection with compiling descriptions of geysers, an activity being encouraged by the U. S. G. S. through regular paychecks. We will all benefit from the geyser history George is compiling for each individual feature.

Norris geysers are playing tricks again. Ledge Geyser erupted on September 6 after being dormant all summer. The new museum interior seems to have been a success, though minor aggravations did develop. The Modulite trail signs in Porcelain Basin were a disheartening failure. In just 3 months of exposure, Yellowstone's harsh environment bleached out all the background color. But we have a lead on a more color-fast process which may be on the market by next season.

Mammoth museum has been bracing for some interior modifications to accommodate the Mammoth Sub-district Ranger and staff. The problem of insufficient remodeling funds has again delayed the project.

The New Blue Spring, which had been the main attraction this past summer, appeared to dry up in late August. As some had predicted, the cracks draining the pools recemented themselves and water again poured over the face of the terrace briefly. As of this writing, the new springs are drying up again, Cedar Tree spring included.

Tower Fall was visited by three grizzlies during the last half of September. Numerous visitors reported the large bears for several days on the grassy flats below the parking area.

Montana Power ended the first leg of its buried power cable project from Mammoth to Mount Washburn. The segment from Washburn to Tower was recently finished with hope of completing the project to Mammoth during the next fiscal year. Power to Tower will soon be a reality.

Canyon lost several concessioner buildings as wrecking crews continue on the rampage. The long bus garages are now gone.

Lake bypass has been funded for this year. Construction began shortly after season's end with right-of-way clearing for the road skirting the Lake "development."

West Thumb bypass road is in the mill. Preliminary flagging and planning were completed this summer. Bids are now being received. As with other bypass projects, the goal at West Thumb is to get heavily traveled roads away from prime thermal features and parking areas. Removal of 27 cabins has already been completed.

Grant Village construction has eased up with some phases ending this fall. There seems to be some doubt about the next phase to get underway.

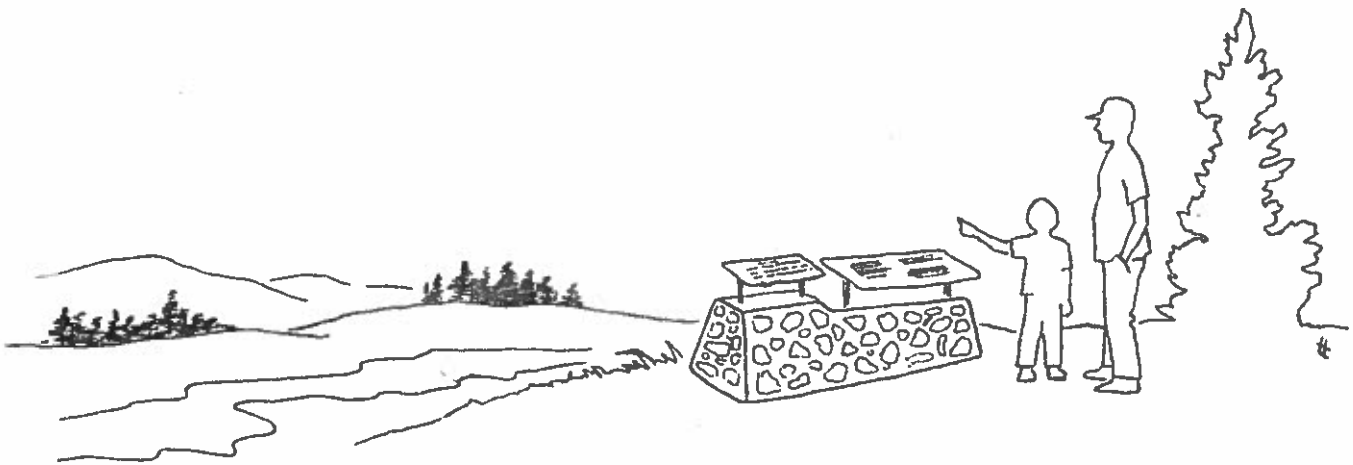
Backcountry cabins were thinned out a bit as the wreckers visited Duck Lake, Grassy Lake, and Purple Mt. lookout, removing ancient structures in their path.

SPECIAL ITEMS OF INTEREST

The Yellowstone Centennial Book is well underway. The YLMA Board recently gave its approval of the project, as well as some substantial financial backing. The photographer, Charles Steinhacker, and the writer, Myron Sutton, have both completed field work. The book is going to be a high quality, first-rate publication of about 224 pages with half of them in full color. It will portray Yellowstone as one of the great natural ecosystems remaining in America and, hopefully, will expand the reader's perspective of the park beyond the traditional roadside view.

The last week of September was wayside exhibit week. Ray Price and Dan Feaser from Harpers Ferry spent ten plus days reviewing wayside exhibits throughout the park. Several of our high rise, log structure exhibits will be replaced by low profile displays of cast aluminum. These exhibits will be embellished by rock and cement bases

where appropriate. Eight first priority exhibits will be constructed this winter and delivered to the park at the start of next season. An additional 10-12 exhibits will be prepared for installation the following summer. The new exhibits will be much more compatible with open country and should be much less of a maintenance problem - - no paint to chip and no glass to clean.





Paddle, paddle, paddle your canoe gently down the
Yellowstone

Carefully, carefully, carefully, carefully the falls
are close you know.

The annual fall river cleanup was held October 15. The Dunmire canoe, manned by Bill, Marj and George, joined six other craft on the annual trash run. Captain Dunmire and crew fished up four tires to add to the accumulation of signs, buoys, cans, bottles, socks, underwear, fishing lures, and a high-back wooden chair. What did you find, Thea?

Some recent rulings by the Civil Service Commission will affect our hiring of seasonals this spring.

Good. Information receptionists have gained rehire rights. Starting this summer, those hired for information station duty will earn the same rehire rights as seasonal Naturalists and Rangers. This will eliminate the annual test currently required.

The wildlife show this fall is stupendous. Elk seem to be bugling on every meadow. The deer are feeding on our lawns and the coyote chorus

is loud and clear every night. Bighorn sheep are working their way to winter ranges. With fishing season just closed, the big German Browns are appearing in every hole along the Gardner.

Most of you may remember the vivid stories told by those lucky enough to see grizzlies taking down elk one after another this spring. The bears are at it again. Mammoth residents watched a large grizzly munching on fresh elk just below the Gardner River Bridge east of Mammoth.

Find yourself an easy chair, curl up and read the enclosed NPS Interpreter's Newsletters for August and September. There are some very thought-provoking "Letters to the Editor" you should read. Read with care Vernon Dame's discussion on Environmental Interpretation. You should find some stimulation there.

With the several holidays coming up, we wish all of you an enjoyable year-end holiday season. As the elk hungrily eye our Christmas trees and the coyotes hungrily watch us ski, we'll all think of you out there, and compose another "Newsletter" sometime after the New Year.

