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"Yellowstone"
by Josie Dizon Henson

"Set aside by the U.S. Congress as a national park on March 1, 1872, Yellowstone National Park was arguably established as the world's first truly national park. When news of the natural wonders of the Yellowstone were first promulgated, the land was part of a federally governed territory. Unlike Yosemite, there was no state government that could assume stewardship of the land, so the federal government took on direct responsibility for the park, a process formally completed in October 1, 1890—the official first National park of the United States. It took the combined effort and interest of conservationists, politicians and especially businesses—namely, the Northern Pacific Railroad, whose route through Montana would greatly benefit by the creation of this new tourist attraction—to ensure the passage of that landmark enabling legislation by the United States Congress to create Yellowstone National Park. Theodore Roosevelt, already an active campaigner and so influential as good stump speakers were highly necessary in the pre-telecommunications era, was highly influential in convincing fellow Republicans and big business to back the bill.

Yellowstone National Park, is located mostly in the U.S. state of Wyoming, though it also extends into Montana and Idaho. The park was the first of its kind, and is known for its wildlife and its many geothermal features, especially Old Faithful Geyser, one of the most popular areas in the park. It has many types of ecosystems, but the subalpine forest is dominant.

Aboriginal Americans have lived in the Yellowstone region for at least 11,000 years. The region was bypassed during the Lewis and Clark Expedition in the early 1800s. Aside from visits by mountain men during the early to mid-1800s, organized exploration did not begin until the late 1860s. The U.S. Army was commissioned to oversee the park just after its establishment. In 1917, administration of the park was transferred to the National Park Service, which had been created the previous year. Hundreds of structures have been built and are protected for their architectural and historical significance, and researchers have examined more than 1,000 archaeological sites.

Yellowstone National Park spans an area of 3,468 square miles (8,983 km²), comprising lakes, canyons, rivers and mountain ranges. Yellowstone Lake is one of the largest high-altitude lakes in North America and is centered over the Yellowstone Caldera, the largest supervolcano on the continent. The caldera is considered an active volcano; it has erupted with tremendous force several times in the last two million years. Half of the world's geothermal features are in Yellowstone, fueled by this ongoing volcanism. Lava flows and rocks from volcanic eruptions cover most of the land area of Yellowstone. The park is the centerpiece of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, the largest remaining, nearly-intact ecosystem in the Earth's northern temperate zone.

Hundreds of species of mammals, birds, fish and reptiles have been documented, including several that are either endangered or threatened. The vast forests and grasslands also include unique species of plants. Grizzlies, wolves, and free-ranging herds of bison and elk live in the park. Forest fires occur in the park each year; in the large forest fires of 1988, nearly one third of the park burned. Yellowstone has numerous recreational opportunities, including hiking, camping, boating, fishing and sightseeing. During the winter, visitors often access the park by way of guided tours that use either snow coaches or snowmobile."

It was just by chance that we happened to see a Post-Convention Tour being offered on the Internet prior to the Salt Lake City Convention. We booked early for the tour offered by Western Leisure Tours. So, after the Convention when most of the Rotarians have left for home, we stayed for an extra day at the Marriott Hotel Downtown which was located across the Salt Palace Convention Center. We had a quiet dinner at the dinning hall which was now quite deserted and went to bed early to wake up in time for our 7:00 A.M. pick-up. We had a hurried breakfast and were just in time with our luggage that we lugged out of the lobby to "Le Bus" our huge bus for the next few days. We were surprised when we saw a couple that was quite familiar. It was Ben's classmate as Training Leader (in Anaheim in 2004) PDG Michael Webb of England and spouse Alison. We picked up other Rotarians and their spouses from the other hotels and then we were on our way. The bus drove us around Salt Lake City and we passed by several landmarks that we have visited previously.

Before we knew it we were in the outskirts of the city and the landscape gradually turned from green to brown. We drove by the City of Ogden, Logan, with a brief stop-over at Pocatello which is famous for its hot springs. But we just had time for cold drinks and some light snacks. We passed through wide expanses of potato fields...miles upon miles of them, and they had round spiral-like mechanized water sprinklers that spouted water to the green rows of potato plants. In about 4 hours we were in Idaho Falls, a lovely city with an extensive greenbelt, or riverbelt, along miles of the Snake River that flows through the center of the city. A famous spot where tourists love to take photos is along the mini-rapid falls with the Idaho Temple in the background. We then headed to the nearby Red Lion Hotel Restaurant where a sumputous lunch awaited us. It was a typical American Buffet, with large generous trays of salads to choose from, cold cuts of ham, turkey, pastrami, etc. and different kinds of breads and rolls, some luscious fresh fruits, saucer-sized cookies and the traditional jello for dessert and of course hot brewed coffee and tea. After the leisurely lunch we headed back to the bus ready for another long drive.

We drove for a few hours more until we stopped in a small valley where a natural spring has been bubbling for hundreds of years. Producing 120 million gallons of water a day, Big Springs is one of the country's largest springs, forming the headwaters of the Henrys Fork of the Snake River. The spring supports enormous rainbow trout which are protected from fishing. A .5 mile handicap accessible trail offers wildlife viewing of osprey, bald eagles, waterfowl and the occasional moose, white-tailed deer, and muskrat. Wildlife can be seen year-round although winter access is restricted by snow. The historic Johnny Sack Cabin site is located here. He has long been gone but after so many years his log cabin was still well-preserved and the spring near it is still bubbling away. We drove some more through miles upon miles of Lodge Pole pine forests, when suddenly, we stopped in the middle of nowhere. It turns out we were in the border of Montana and Idaho and Ted our guide said that we simply had to go down to have some photos taken for here at the Idaho-Montana border, the great Continental Divide was located.

We asked what the Continental Divide was and Ted explained... *It is a line of elevated terrain which forms a border between two watersheds such that water falling on one side of the line eventually travels to one ocean or body of water, and water on the other side travels to another, generally on the opposite side of the continent. Because the exact border between bodies of water is usually not clearly defined, the continental divide is not always definite for any continent. However, in North America, the Divide begins at Cape Prince of Wales in Alaska. It runs northeast-/eastward across the north of the state into the Yukon Territory, Canada, where it turns south and travels through British Columbia (forming part of the B.C.-Alberta boundary), in Canada; then through Montana (forming part of the Montana-Idaho boundary), Wyoming, Colorado, and New Mexico, in the United States.* That was indeed very enlightening and we thanked Ted for the invaluable information.

In the late afternoon we finally reached West Yellowstone, Montana, *which since the early 1900s, has provided a tourist-friendly gateway to the geysers of Yellowstone National Park and its resident bison, bears and elk. This Rocky Mountain enclave in southwestern Montana is an outdoor enthusiast's dream, offering snowmobiling, cross-country skiing and dog sledding in winter; trout fishing in fall; birding, biking and hiking in spring; and summer parades and rodeos. In-town eateries and attractions are an easy stroll from local lodging.* We were brought to the Kelly Inn at West Yellowstone, located just 3 blocks from Yellowstone's west entrance. Our room was was quite large and equipped with a 25 inch color television, hairdryer, and most importantly, a coffee maker. It was also a short walk to The Grizzly & Wolf Discovery Center whose goal was to provide visitors to the Yellowstone area an opportunity to observe, learn and appreciate grizzly bears and gray wolves.

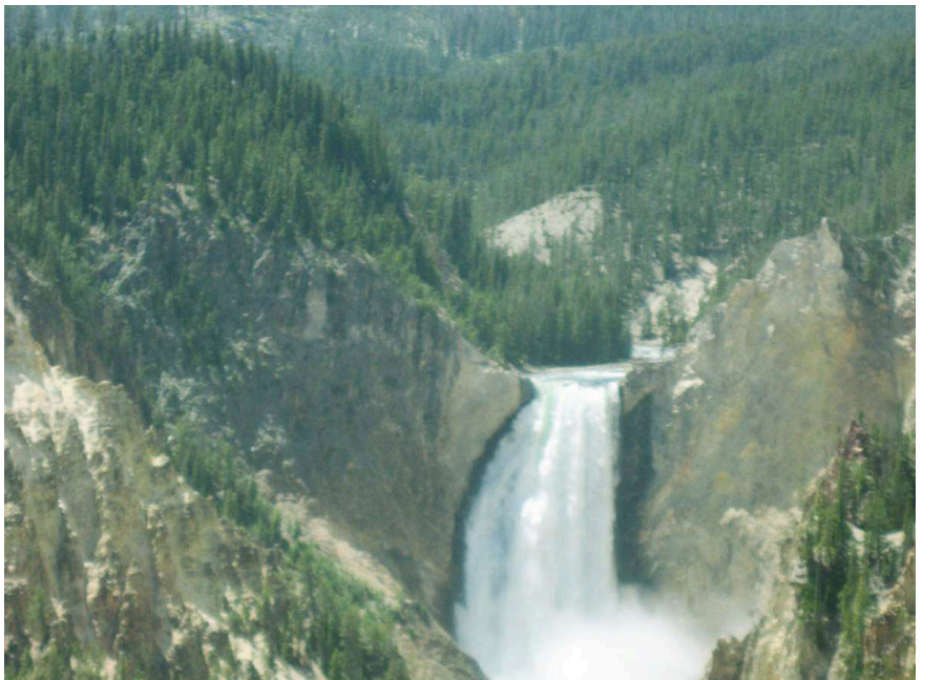
After as we were settled, we left our things and decided to walk over to the Center and saw live Grizzly Bears fighting each other and some wolves running around the park that was fenced. We also visited their small museum and gift shop which had lots of gift items, shirts and blouses. Because it was summer the sun was up till 9 P.M. so Ben and I even had time to watch a short movie in the quaint IMAX Theater that they had. We had a dinner of elk hamburger at a small restaurant, then went to bed. We had a deluxe complimentary continental breakfast early the next morning and were all excited to view the natural wonders which abound throughout this area. South of Madison Junction, at the end of Fire Hole Lake Drive, is Fountain Paint Pot, an amazing expanse of geysers, multi-colored mud pots and hot springs. Gibbon Falls, north of the visitor center and Firehole Cascades, south of the center offered expansive views of some of the park's famous waterfalls.

During all this time I really thought that the whole Yellowstone Park was in Wyoming. Yes, 96 % is in Wyoming, but 3 % is in Montana and 1% is in Idaho and I was pleasantly surprised to know that the West Entrance, where we entered was located at West Yellowstone, Montana. After our bus got in, it was only after several miles that we got into into Madison Junction, Wyoming, which is located south of Mammoth Hot Springs. It is best known as the place where Yellowstone was born. Its highest point is 11,358 ft / 3,462 meters (Eagle Peak), its lowest point: 5,282 ft / 1,610 meters (Reese Creek) and it is larger than Rhode Island and Delaware combined. Approximately 5% of park is covered by water; 15% is grassland; and 80% is forested. A small log cabin that is now the visitor center was positioned at the confluence of the Firehole and Gibbon Rivers on the Madison Plateau. It is now a quaint reminder of Yellowstone's modest beginnings. The idea of a national park "for the People's benefit" was reportedly conceived around a campfire at this location during the Washburn, Doane and Langford exploration of the Yellowstone area in 1870. Congress endorsed the idea two years later.

Ted, our guide was wise in getting us into the park early...the wooden walkways leading into into the geysers, mud pots and hot springs were not yet crowded. We visited several amazing mud pots and beautifully colored hot springs. Several active geysers spouted white cloudy mists smelling of sulphur. After seeing several of these we were brought to wide area to wait for Old Faithful's performance. This most famous of Yellowstone's geysers was discovered in 1870 by the Washburn Expedition. Old Faithful geyser was named for its frequent eruptions — which number more than a million since Yellowstone became the world's first national park in 1872. Old Faithful erupts about every 92 minutes, shooting water 135 feet into the air on average. Like most of the Yellowstone's geysers, Old Faithful gets its water from deep inside the earth. Snow and rainwater reach depths of about 10,000 feet below the ground, where it is heated by magma and forced back up through the surface.

The most breathtaking sight in Yellowstone Park is the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone — an awe-inspiring canyon 4,000 feet wide and 1,200 feet deep in places. From the canyon's many vantage points, you can see two of the most impressive Yellowstone waterfalls: the Lower Falls, which steeply plunge 308 feet into the canyon, and the Upper Falls, which tumble 109 feet down. All in all, according to Ted, there were 42 waterfalls in Yellowstone. We were going to visit only two. Our first stop was at Gibbon Falls and I must say I was a bit disappointed, but still, this graceful, lacy cascade is a jewel set in amid a verdant lodgepole pine forest. I thought there was a bigger falls whose photos I have seen before. Well, I was not prepared for the spectacle that awaited me after a long walk from the bus. Its Location was at the Canyon area. Known as Lower Falls, 308 Feet high, this most magnificent of Yellowstone's falls cascaded away in the distance, its waters forming white foamy mists halfway down below. We posed for a photo together with the magnificent falls in the background and also took photos of our new-found friends form Singapore, PDG Dr. Wu Dar Ching and Spouse Lorna. I saw an artist doing a watercolor of the falls and I felt envious.

Charles Cook — of the Folsom-Cook-Peterson expedition of 1869 — is credited with discovering the canyon. He is said to have commented, "I sat there in amazement while my companions came up, and after that, it seemed to me that it was five minutes before anyone spoke." Today, the Grand Canyon of Yellowstone is as beautiful as ever. It's so stunning, in fact, that its spectacular colors inspired the famous artist, Thomas Moran.



There are three hotels within viewing distance of the geyser, including a very nice new one, but undoubtedly the crown jewel of Yellowstone's man-made wonders...seven stories tall with dormers peaking from a shingled, steep-sloping roof, an architectural wonder that was designed and built during the winter of 1903-04 by Architect Robert Chambers Reamer to blend into the natural environment -- and it has been the place to stay in Yellowstone for a century. First welcoming guests in 1904, The Old Faithful Inn as designed by its architect who wanted the asymmetry of the building to reflect the chaos of nature. The lobby of the hotel features a 65-foot ceiling, a massive rhyolite fireplace, and railings made of contorted Lodge Pole pine. Wings were added to the hotel in 1915 and 1927, and today there are 327 rooms available to guests in this National Historic Landmark.

The cavernous, log-laden lobby is striking, with an ambience that is half elegant palace and half rugged wilderness lodge. You can climb the stairs to its internal balconies, but seismic activity eventually closed the crow's nest, where a chamber orchestra initially performed for the well-dressed guests below. Only 30 miles from the west entrance and 40 miles from the south entrance, this is the first place visitors think of when they want a bed for the night. The architect, Robert C. Reamer, was 29 years old when he took the inn commission, his first important building.

As one approaches Old Faithful Inn, the building's profile is its most noticeable feature. The steep pitch of the roof - jagged with gables and cedar shingles - seems to echo the silhouette of the famous Tetons to the south. Flags bedeck the precarious widows walk, as they would the summit of the Grand.

The spectacular Old Faithful Inn is within short viewing distance of Old Faithful Geyser. On the day we were there, it was after lunchtime and a huge crowd already surrounded the most famous geyser in the United States. Since we knew its next eruption, we killed our time touring the huge hotel, going up and down its stairs and inspecting some of the vacant rooms. It is one of the biggest if not the biggest of the few remaining log hotels in the United States. Its unique and rustic design has made the Old Faithful Inn a significant part of the history of Yellowstone National Park, and a favorite attraction for visitors to the park. Throughout the 2004 season, the sprawling Old Faithful Inn, the heart and soul of Yellowstone National Park, celebrated its 100th anniversary.

After that exhilarating spectacular display by Old Faithful, we were ready to board the bus for another destination. This time we drove just a short distance then stopped at Jackson Lake Lodge that was formerly owned by the Rockefeller Family of New York. It is situated on a bluff with spectacular views across the waters of Jackson Lake with the skyline of the Tetons in the background. The upper lobby features 60-foot picture windows framing the Grand Tetons Mountain Range, as well as a collection of Native American artifacts and Western Art.

The Jackson Lake Lodge was started in the early 1900s, after the completion of the dam in 1911. As the years went on the building was added to. Today it has 385 rooms and a couple of restaurants and is considered the nicest place to stay within the park. Jackson Lake Lodge epitomizes the architectural milieu of the period when Grand Teton became a park. That era was the 1950s, an age of right angles, flat roofs, and big windows. While not as distinctive as Yellowstone's standouts, the lodge is more functional and comfortable than its northern counterparts. The setting is sublime, overlooking Willow Flats with the lake in the distance, and, towering over it without so much as a stick in the way, the Tetons and Mount Moran. You don't even have to go outside to see this impressive view -- the lobby has 60-foot-wide windows showcasing the panorama.

Over the years it was the choice of prominent people coming to the area. Not only the Rockefellers but the Kennedy's, DuPonts and others. Sometimes it was used as a retreat and meeting place for visiting officials from other countries. In the 1980s the U.S. Secretary of State and his Russian counterpart signed a treaty there. The table where they signed the treaty is on display on the second floor near the gift shops.

The spectacular view of the Grand Tetons especially Mt. Moran seen from the huge picture windows was simply irresistible so we all piled outside to snap photos. We went back to the bus for a much-needed respite then, and just enjoyed the view of the park where we excitedly espied some bison in the distance. When our bus came near several bulls grazing contentedly, we couldn’t resist the urge to get down from the bus and take more photos. Later, I chanced upon an elk grazing in the distance. I took it from afar as I didn’t want to risk being mowed down by the big elk.

According to Ted Winder…In 1923 several of the local ranchers along with Horace Albright, superintendent of Yellowstone, met to see if there was a way to start a movement that would save the area from exploitation. They realized that the valley was being ruined. One of the ranchers happened to be a friend to an assistant of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. It was through him that Rockefeller got interested.

In 1926 Rockefeller travelled west for a trip to Yellowstone and a side trip down to Jackson Hole. He was shocked to see the many camps, road-side hot dog stands and billboards proclaiming the area as "Home of the Hollywood Cowboy." He decided to get involved. To cover his tracks, he and others formed the Snake River Land Company. Later in 1929 the government voted to establish a small Grand Teton National Park that only protected the mountains. After a number of years of battles between those for and against the park, President Roosevelt in 1943 made an end run around and accepted the 32,000 Rockefeller acres and added another 130,000 acres of forestland to create the Jackson Hole National Monument. Locals were outraged and fought the move for many years, even threatening to "shoot to kill" park officials. Finally in 1950 a compromise was reached and the new Grand Teton Park finally came to fruition.

After passing through the lovely pine forests and steep mountains we came upon remains of the 1988 fire that gutted hundreds of hectares of pine forests. The fire almost reached The Old Faithful Inn were it not for the help of thousands of volunteer fire fighters. Most of the area has new pine trees growing (Around 10 to 12 feet high) and in another few years the area will be fully recovered. We then left the mountains into the huge valley and in the distance we could view verdant hills. As we neared the place, it turned out be Jackson Hole and here is some detailed data on it...

In the spring of 1822, David E. Jackson responded to an ad in the St. Louis Enquirer which read: Wanted: 100 enterprising young men to ascend the Missouri River to the Rocky Mountains, there to be employed as hunters. As compensation to each man fit for such business, $200 per annum to be given for his services.

Jackson signed on with William Ashley's fur company and was truly enterprising. In 1826, he and two other fur trappers, Jedediah

Smith and William Sublette, bought out Ashley. In 1830, having made a sizable profit in only four years, these partners sold the company.

To mountain men, a low-lying valley surrounded by mountains was called a "hole." Because mountain-rivers and streams that ran through holes created good habitat for beaver and other fur-bearing animals, trappers worked in these areas. Often a trapper assumed unwritten rights to trapping areas, and many places were named for the men who worked there most frequently. Sublette named the valley "Jackson's Hole" for his partner in 1829. Eventually the possessive was dropped because it was the butt of too many jokes.

Archeologists deduce people have been visiting the valley as long as 12,000 years ago. Artifacts of hunter-gatherers have been found dating from 500 to 5,000 years ago. During pre-historic times, no one tribe claimed ownership to Jackson Hole, but Blackfeet, Crow, Gros Ventre, Shoshone and other Native Americans living on surrounding lands used this neutral valley during the warm months. Severe winters prevented habitation.

For three decades between 1810 and 1840, this area was a crossroads for the six main trapper trails that converged in Jackson Hole. Mountain men had the run of the valley where, from 1824 to 1840, they held annual summer rendezvous, the equivalent of modern day trade shows. Here, they sold their furs or traded them with companies like the Hudson Bay Company and the Astoria Fur Company for winter supplies. These gatherings also allowed the trail-weary mountain men a chance to eat, drink and be merry with other trappers, as well as test their ability in contests of skill. By 1845, the fur trade had ended as the fashion of men's beaver hats back East gave way to silk hats. For the next four decades, Jackson Hole remained unsettled because of its relative isolation and was visited only by wandering tribes and government expeditions.

The most memorable of these expeditions was the Hayden expedition in 1871. Pictures taken of Yellowstone by expedition photographer William Henry Jackson helped persuade the federal government to designate it the nation's first national park 1872, 18 years before Wyoming became a state.

Jackson Hole didn't see settlers until 1883, when John and Millie Carnes and John Holland became the first unofficial citizens of Jackson Hole. They crossed via an old Native American trail, clearing trees for the wagon as they went. By the mid-1890s, settlers dotted the valley around villages named Kelly, Wilson and Moran. The historic buildings at Menor's Ferry near Grand Teton National Park headquarters in the town of Moose survive from this era.

The town site of Jackson was laid out in 1897 where Cache and Flat Creek meet - a location central to many ranches of that time in the valley. Soon a bank, stores, churches and a park (the Town Square is now bordered by four elk horn arches, one at each corner) sprouted to complete the beginning of the town. Some of the structures surrounding the town square were the first buildings. Streets to the south contain houses that have been there since the early days. As Jackson Hole's beef industry grew, large elk herds that roamed the mountains and valleys began to compete with cattle for hay supplies.

To help ranchers, Congress began a federal feed program for the Jackson elk herd. A few years later in 1910, the federal government bought the 24,600 acres just north of town, now the National Elk Refuge, to help keep the herd from starving in the winter and to preserve the ranching lifestyle in Jackson Hole.

Nearly 3,000 elk summer in Grand Teton National Park. Free ranging and migratory, elk spend all summer gaining weight to sustain them through the coming winter. The first few inches of snow trigger migration to the National Elk Refuge immediately south of the park. Approximately 7,000 elk (over half the Jackson herd) spend their winter on the Refuge. Visitors enjoy elk hunting and trout fishing on Flat Creek on the Refuge during certain seasons. In winter, sleigh rides bring visitors among the herd.

After 1900, some settlers realized that "dudes winter better than cows." Helped by its proximity to two future national parks (GTNP and Yellowstone), the valley began to become famous for big game hunting. Ranchers often took guests and offered guide services, providing a base for "dude ranching." These old cattle operations became new vacation destinations for fly fishermen, hunters and horseback riders.

Tourism started to replaced cattle ranching as Jackson Hole's economic base. This was facilitated when the land around the Tetons was progressively designated as a national park. The eastern half of the Teton Range, and five of the six glacial lakes, was designated as a Nation Park in 1929, not a National Monument. In 1943 President Roosevelt created a National Monument (The Jackson Hole National Monument), which included that land on the valley floor, which remained in the public domain, and roughly 32,000 acres donated by the Rockefeller Family under John D. Rockefeller. In 1950 President Truman combined the Jackson Hole National Monument Lands and Grand Teton National Park (the original park) into the "new" Grand Teton National Park, as we know it today.

The town of Jackson also brought nationwide recognition to Wyoming by helping it become known as the Equality State. In 1920, an all-female town council was elected - the first of its kind in the country.

The many movies made in Jackson Hole have added to the valley's fame, beginning with an early version of "Nanette of the North" in 1921. The famous "Shane" was filmed north of Kelly on Antelope Flats, north of Moose and on the National Elk Refuge. When Henry Fonda and Maureen O'Hara made "Spencer's Mountain" in 1963, and some 200 local people appeared as extras;

the little log building of St. John Episcopal Church was the setting for some of the scenes. Rosalind Russell in "The Unexpected Mrs. Polifax" did most of her outdoor filming on top of Rendezvous Peak above Teton Village, arriving there via the aerial tram. Countless nature specials and outdoor commercials have also made use of the spectacular scenery. Vacationers enjoy visiting the sites of all these movies, as well as all the other scenic and historic places in the area.

There are galleries too that have grown up around a number of well-known artists who make their home here. Local artisans abound and exhibit their products at half-dozen craft fairs every year. Add to these attractions the recreation available - such as fishing, river rafting on the wild waters and calmer stretches of the Snake River, horseback riding, hiking, golfing and tennis - and the result is a great vacation. In the evenings, there are rodeos, live musical comedy shows and even a full symphony orchestra in the summer. In the winter, ski deep powder, get away from it all on a snowmobile or view the elk herds from a horse-drawn sleigh.

Today, Jackson Hole is a winter and summer playground for outdoor enthusiasts from all over the world. Skiing, snowboarding, hiking, rock climbing, mountain biking and kayaking are just some of the activities. "The Last and the Best of the Old West," Jackson Hole's culture is unique, blending its western heritage with that of a destination resort. On the board sidewalks of Jackson, cowboys with hats and spurs are often juxtaposed against snowboarders with dreadlocks and nose rings.

Prehistoric visitors came to feed the body. Today's visitors nourish the spirit. Management of Grand Teton National Park honors the mandate to protect the natural systems that produce the scenery and wildlife for the enjoyment of future generations.

Jackson is a major gateway for millions of tourists visiting nearby Grand Teton National Park, Yellowstone National Park, and the National Elk Refuge. Jackson is also in close proximity to several ski resorts. Directly in town, there is a small but challenging resort known as Snow King Resort. Snow King Resort has one of the steepest vertical slopes and is one of the few night-lit resorts in the nation. The Jackson Hole Mountain Resort, one of the biggest resorts in the country, is just 12 miles northwest. Also, Grand Targhee Resort which is just about an hour away from Jackson is world-renowned for its "Heavenly powder".

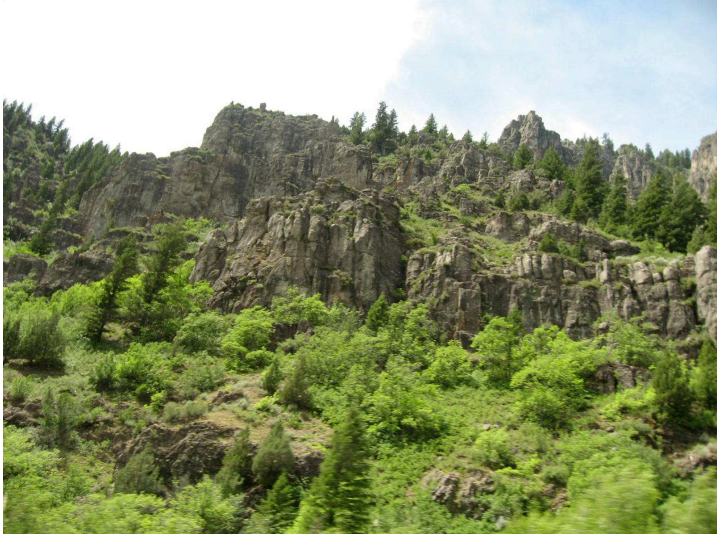
Jackson was a very picturesque town and we stayed at the Elk Country Inn, a cozy medium sized hotel providing amazing customer care. Friendly western hospitality is what we all got. There was complimentary e-mail service and when I had to call from friends in L.A. the friendly manager did not even charge us. Our room had two queensized beds and a big TV with free coffee. Behind the cottages we could view the green ski slopes which must be a great sight in winter. Jackson is such a small town, everything is within walking distance.

Jackson is home to the world's largest ball of barbed wire, and large arches of shed elk antlers at the four entrances to the town square.

The main industries which provide employment are: Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services. The town is sometimes mistakenly called Jackson Hole. That name refers only to the valley in which the town is located, not the town itself.

The town also plays host to the annual Jackson Hole Writers Conference founded by author, Warren Adler. Jackson and the surrounding area has long been a favorite destination for celebrities, Today, Jackson Hole has many famous people who own homes there. Some include: Harrison Ford, Danny DeVito, Connie Stevens, Sandra Bullock, Gerald Spence, Charles DuPont and Dick Cheney and Tiger Woods. The town has over 30 art galleries and is called the "art center of the Rockies." The population is about 10,000 but in the summer they may have as many as 35,000 visitors in a day! Over 3 million visit each year. Teton County has the highest per capita income of any county in America ($70,000 per person).

After an overnight stay in Jackson, we had a late breakfast then got all of our luggages together to load them for the last time in our big “Le Bus”. We were ready to go back to Salt Lake City. After several hours of driving through some of the most spectacular rock formations along the steep mountains, we were back in the flat lands. We stopped in Montpelier, Idaho *which was the first vanguard of Mormon colonists sent to the valley by their leader Brigham Young in September 1863. The following spring, the first sixteen families settled the Montpelier area to establish a fledgling community.*



Like most western communities, the town name was changed numerous times. First known by Oregon Trail travelers as Clover Creek, it later became Belmont and finally was given the name Montpelier by Brigham Young after a town in his birth state of Vermont. Within the first year, businesses sprang up along the strip later known as Fourth Street. It was a choice location because of the heavy Oregon Trail "traffic".

On August 13, 1896, Montpelier was the site of an infamous bank heist that became an integral part of Bear Lake folklore. According to Matt Warner in his biography, Cassidy robbed the Montpelier bank in an effort to get money to bail Warner out of jail. That has never been proven, but for a certainty Cassidy, Elza Lay and Bob Meeks robbed the bank, August 13, 1896. No one has proven once and for all what happened to Cassidy. Whether he died in Bolivia in a shoot out or returned to live out his days in the USA, it is sure that his infamous legacy lives on in the history of Bear Lake county.

At Montpelier we got down at the National Oregon/California Trail Center. Montpelier was a popular among Oregon Trail Travelers, and an Oregon wagon reproduction was prominently displayed outside. After looking through some of the interesting displays, we were ready for lunch. We got back to the bus for a short drive into the countryside once more. We passed through a dirt road and wondered where we were going. The bus stopped, we got down and we were asked to get into wagons complete with two horses, but with modern rubber tires, being driven by a pretty blond lady with a cowboy hat. We all rode into the wagons intil we got down near a sprawling barn-like building whose entrance was reminiscent of the Western movies in the Midwest. Nearby was a general store with some antique products on display and for sale. The group patiently waited for the others to arrive as there were only two wagons to ferry everyone. While we were waiting for the lunch to be served, there was a Western show just for us, with costumed ladies and cowboys doing some mock shooting and a blond long-haired guy who was a whiz at the whip. We all enjoyed the sumptuous lunch with grilled chicken, potato salad, rolls, lots of apples nd oranges and cake for dessert.

It was time to go and in a few hours we were back in Salt Lake City. The Bus dropped off everyone to their respective hotels and so we again got a “Free” city tour as we were the last ones to be dropped off. With heavy hearts, we said goodbye to our old Rotarian friends from England, new-found Rotarian friends from Singapore, Brazil, New Zealand, England, the United States, etc. and from our expert and patient guide, Ted Winder.

Made on a Mac