



# THE PUMPER

AUGUST 1993

YPSS - GAS WITH CLASS

NEXT EDITION



## YPSS Raises More Than a Thousand Bucks for Flood Relief!

*Auction proceeds and donations from YPSS employees hit well over 4 figures! The money was sent to the American Red Cross.*

*Gas fumes and isolation provided the inspiration for the following account by Scott Herring.*

July 27. I've just come from the highway cleanup. Last year, YPSS adopted two miles of Highway 89; three times a year, as many of us as can get away drive the vast distances involved, bushwhack through vast stretches of weed-choked and snake-infested ditch, and pick up trash. Sounds like big fun, huh?

It is (sincere), but it's not easy to say why. Let me describe how this one went, then maybe I can offer a plausible explanation.

I arrived unfashionably early at Bill Berg's riverfront home, our base for the cleanup, and for the post-cleanup festivities. I believe I planned on loafing and tossing tennis balls for Bergie's dog Whippet to fetch. (A real Montana dog, that Whippet. She has a habit of retrieving chunks of roadkill and depositing them on the porch). Instead, I helped set up, hanging warning

signs on the road, moving tables around for the pot-luck dinner - oh, yes, and reviewing the "Historical YPSS Artifacts" that Bergie had set aside for the auction.

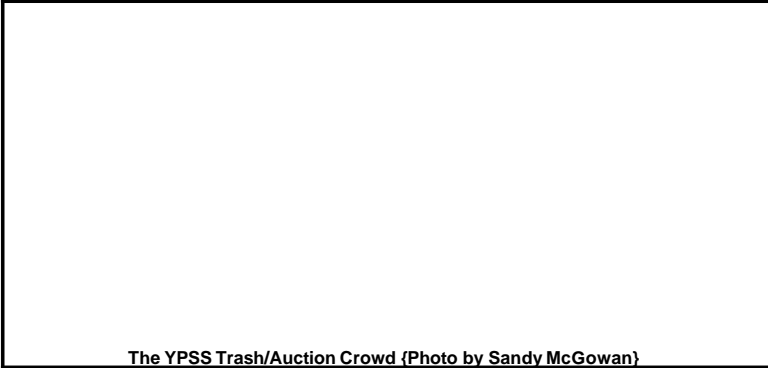
By way of explanation: since I've been working in the park, each summer has seen some major disaster in the world, sometimes leading to a happy ending, sometimes not. In 1990, the invasion of Kuwait; in '91, the Soviet coup; in '92,

Hurricane Andrew, and this year, of course, the Mississippi Valley floods. Last summer YPSS passed the hat and over a thousand dollars came out of tog pockets & tip funds for Hurricane relief.

This time, Bergie decided to try something different. He rummaged around the warehouse, looking for what his circular (advertising the highway cleanup and post-cleanup tomfoolery) described as "Historical YPSS Artifacts". His idea was to auction them off as souvenirs to the

cleanup Continued from Page 1 crowd, the proceeds to benefit the American Red Cross flood relief fund. "I don't know about this," Bergie said to me,

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The YPSS Trash/Auction Crowd (Photo by Sandy McGowan)

### Satisfied in Seattle

August 10, 1993

To Whom it May Concern,

During our travels through Yellowstone on August 2nd this year our camper van broke down. Our trip could have been a disaster but thanks to two of your tow truck drivers, Coby out of Fishing Bridge and Karl S. from Old Faithful we had a memorable trip. Both young men were very polite and most entertaining. Coby towed us to Old Faithful and the station was about to close but they tried to fix our problem anyway. It turned out that it was a computer problem and Karl towed us to West Yellowstone and kept us entertained the whole time even to the extent that we didn't even mind the two twenty minute delays while the road was being stripped. Both men deserve a thank you for I'm sure they must put up with a lot from some of the tourists, they turned our misfortune and what could have been a disastrous time into fun. Again I would like to thank them both.

Sincerely,

Wayne & Dian Gurnett - Seattle, Washington

### Gas Is Thicker Than Blood?

Here is the annual scoop on who out there is related to others who have done this YPSS thing:

- \* Coby Dawson's (#32) father worked for YPSS. Coby's brother, 1992 Bite-the-Bag Champ Eddie, put in 2 seasons with YPSS.
- \* Mike Tercek (# 9) recruited his Dad, Tom, who worked in the office.
- \* Darlene "Buford" Bowlin and Dr. Dan "The-fix-it-Man" Bowlin both work out of the office and found each other before they found YPSS.
- \* Carol Sawyer (Office) followed her brother and sister-in-law, Greg and Cami, to YPSS. Greg & Cami hung up their togs last year.
- \* Ernie Jew (# 33) has outlasted his sister Debbie who he says may come back.
- \* Christie Daigle's (# 2) Aunt (Colette Daigle-Berg) and two Uncles (Joe Daigle and Bill Berg) have also worked the lanes.
- \* Lisa and Jerry Egbert met over the gas pumps at Grant Village and are working at Canyon this summer.
- \* Dan Emick's (# 32) wife Elsie knows what a bugger is. She worked the lanes as a part-time pumper a couple of years ago at Bridge.
- \* Hal Broadhead met his wife Jean in the Park and Jean cranked out many a report in the YPSS office. We're still waiting to get some togs on Benjamin, Nicholas and Jonathan. Hal's sister Carol also worked for YPSS.

**Congratulations to Tara  
Munroe and Steve  
Krumm**

# Headin' Home

Several folks have already finished their YPSS seasons and are back at home or school. Going back home after a summer in Yellowstone can be a difficult transition. We've been told there should be a debriefing before we turn folks loose again in the "real" world.

There are some things to keep in mind as you prepare to leave. Be kind to your crew and yourself - work through your agreed upon termination date. That date was a significant factor in the decision to offer you a job. If you leave early you leave an unfair burden on your partners. The signature on your employment agreement should stand for something. To a Pumper, honoring your agreement translates into 25 cents for every hour you worked during the summer. For a 3 month season that comes to \$120. Seeing it through in style also sends a strong message about your dependability. It affects your rehire and promotion status as well as the reference that will be given to future potential employers if you use YPSS as a reference.

Here are some additional items to consider:

- \* If you need a cash advance before you leave, order it several days before you need it.
- \* Clean your room before you leave. It's only right - you will be charged a cleaning fee if someone else has to pick up after you.
- \* Don't let up on the job - show your stuff the rest of the season. This season is your tryout for a promotion for next summer.
- \* Ask for a job evaluation from your supervisor before you leave. Give some feedback to your supervisors as well. We're all in this together and we can all learn so much more if we share our impressions. There's a difference between complaining and critiqueing.
- \* Please fill out the questionnaires that will come with paychecks on August 22nd and return them to Gardiner.
- \* You DO NOT have to check out through Gardiner. Turn your keys, togs/uniforms, sheets, blankets, pillow etc. in to your supervisor at your location. Also turn in your ID card. It will be sent to you with your last check if you wish.
- \* Put your forwarding address on the back of your last time card. Also note your last night in the dorm and your last meal with TW or Hams.

Bonus checks for Attendants and Shift Supervisors will be paid with a separate check two weeks after your last paycheck. Provide an address on the back of your final time card to which we can send your checks and correspondence throughout the winter.

Managers, Assistants, and Shifts: If your uniforms are in good shape put them on hangers and tag them with your name. If you come back next year we can have them cleaned and ready for you in the spring.

If you have any questions or suggestions please ask your manager or give a call to the office.

## Volunteering in Yellowstone

### MABW - Making a Better World

Whether it's picking up trash on the highway, doing trail work in Yellowstone, or helping out victims of hurricanes and floods it's nice to think we can help to make the world a better place.

In 1992 YPSS assembled a team of volunteers who restored a section of trail along the Yellowstone River in the Fishing Bridge area. Hal has worked out the details on a volunteer project for the rest of this season. The Park Service needs help pulling exotic weeds along the road in the Sylvan Pass area.

If you have some spare time give Hal a call and we'll get some folks lined out. An hour here and there can really add up.

## 1993 Yellowstone Park Softball Champs!

Nelson Scott coached and played on the team that took it all again this year. Hal Broadhead, Pops, and Tom Nelson played on the team as well.

*Condolence to those at Fishing Bridge and Canyon who so boldly predicted victory for themselves.*

## How to Provide Great Customer Service

*{Adapted from Inc. Magazine}*

Ask customers what they want and give it to them. YOU don't define customer service. Your customers do.

Rely on systems, not smiles. Smiling, saying thank you, and going the extra mile are important parts of customer service. They can't compensate for a bad system. The secret to providing good service is the creation of systems that allow you to do the job right the first time, every time. It is not enough to treat the customers fairly only when they complain; you must find the cause of the problem and fix it before it affects other customers too.

Empower your employees. Service is judged by the contact customers receive with everyone at your company. Every employee who comes into contact with customers should be able to solve their problems.

The answer should always be yes. If customers ask, "Can you...?" the answer should always be yes. Find a way to do what they want. As long as their requests are somehow related to your business, meet them.

There is no such thing as after-hours. Somebody must always be available to handle customers' needs. Service is a commitment that lasts 24 hours-a-day. How can you provide great service if you're asking your customers to conform to your schedule?

But you don't need someone in the office 24 hours a day. An answering service or machine can establish that link. If you really want to impress your customers, give out your home phone or forward your business phone to your home.

Underpromise and overdeliver. Keep your word - then exceed it. If you promise the job will be done by 3 p.m., make sure it's completed by 2:30. If for any reason you can't do what you promised, let the customer know in plenty of time, and offer to make amends.

Look good. People like to do business where they feel comfortable. Make your business look warm, clean, and inviting. Take a walk around your place, trying to see things from a customer's perspective. If you aren't happy with what you see, they probably aren't either.

Teach your customers how to get the best service. If you're typically mobbed when you open the doors, suggest that customers come later in the day. Also, show your customers that if they spend more time describing what's wrong, they'll have a better chance of having it quickly made right.

Commit yourself to continual improvements. Make every part of your operation better. Set up schedules that require you to periodically reexamine every product, system, and person. Don't end that examination without making everything a little bit better. Then do it all over again six months later, and six months after that, and ...

Take these ideas and apply what you can to your job with YPSS. Take them home with you to your other endeavors, and share your thoughts with the rest of us if you have some ideas about providing great customer service. (You know we have yet to receive a letter to the editor. Send your thoughts in to *The Pumper*.)

anxiety in his voice. "This idea might fly..."

Or you might be very badly embarrassed.

Here is a partial list of the fine merchandise he had chosen for the auction: A few pump-toppers ("Park Bison are Wild and Dangerous!"), two pairs of destroyed dog-togs, a pair of well-used pump nozzles, a Buford or two (the circular described them as "Genuine All-Metal Buford Machines"), some more-or-less idiotic paperweights, a neolithic adding machine, a paleolithic cash register, an even older-looking tire tool, a desk lamp which, Bergie admitted, gave off an "ominous smell" when lit, a pile of elderly paperwork, and on and on. Apart from the three rather handsome wall maps of the park, and apart from the baked goods that Carol Sawyer provided, it was a collection of the most astonishing rubbish.

Surveying the debris, I shared Bergie's misgivings. We'd be lucky if we made fifteen bucks off this stuff.

Two of the Buford machines went off the auction block when we took a closer look and realized that both were in better shape than the Buford I am still doing business with at Tower. The Precambrian tire tool, mentioned above, was nearly identical to a tool I use every day. Tower Junction YPSS: the Station that Time Forgot.

Pops showed up; we loafed for a bit then grabbed our bags, put on our glow-in-the-dark Highway Department vests, and hit Highway 89. After a long, hot march in the sun we returned to Bergie's house, ate dinner and dessert, tossed the football around. Bergie had a Spud Gun, a pop-gun that fired little cores taken from a raw potato, and Nelson used it to shoot up the place.

A good turnout had gradually trickled in; there were maybe thirty of us. Chris Benden showed up; he'd been recruited to act as auctioneer. Bergie handed out a few Garbological Awards, and it was time to find out how generous we all felt.

With a fine display of confidence that I sure didn't share, Bergie set up a stage on his back porch. There was a table on which those appalling "artifacts" were arrayed, Stephanie Moore would play the role of Vanna White, showing off each item to its best effect, and there was even a cash register area where Anita would ring up the enormous amount of money we'd be making.

The first item was one of the least promising; a box full of YPSS matchbooks from long, long ago. "When we used these," Chris said, holding one up for display, "most cars on the road looked like this one." The matchbook cover sported a picture of a Stanley Steamer. He continued: "And you know these are gonna be collector's items, because we've only got about three full cases left in the warehouse."

Oh, way to go, Benden, I thought: way to subtract value from the product, and not much there to spare.

Then he surprised us all. "Do we have an opening bid?"

"One dollar!", someone shouted.

"One dollar. One-dollar-one-dollar-the-bid-is-one-dollar-one-dollar-do-I-hear-two-dollars-two-dollars-do-I-hear-two-dollars-do-I-hear-one-fifty..."

Just like a livestock auctioneer - and he was fast. Too fast. You had to be careful what you did with your hands; scratch your ear, and it might be interpreted as a bid.

By ruthlessly working the crowd Chris managed to come up with a final bid of four dollars, an astonishing sum, I thought. We proceeded to a slightly more worthwhile item, I believe it was the very quaint matching set of Conoco restroom signs. "Nelson, how old are these?", Chris asked.

Nelson, a twenty-two season veteran, shook his head. "I think those pre-date Charlie Gallagher."

"Do I have an opening bid?"

"Two Dollars!"

"Two-dollars-the-bid-is-two-dollars..."

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"Three dollars!"

## MERRY CHRISTMAS IN AUGUST!

*Christmas comes but twice a year, once at home and once out here . . .*

"Four dollars!"

And at this point, the thing started to take off.

It was infectious. You'd find yourself deciding that you wanted some silly piece of junk; when Chris shouted "Going once! Going twice!", a sort of madness seized you, and you shouted back some outlandish figure. But it all seemed less insane during those odd intervals when you remembered that it was all for disaster relief, and for a disaster that, given the number of midwesterners we always employ, hits closer to home. And, as usually happens when we all get together, that goofy, gonzo YPSS humor fanned the flames.

Colette Daigle-Berg took a fancy to one of the paperweights. It was a piece of wood with "COMPLAINT DEPARTMENT - TAKE A NUMBER" written on it, the number hanging from the pin on a phony hand grenade. It came with one of the Bufords. She paid sixteen dollars for the set, though she wisely gave the Buford back to be re-auctioned. "Yeah, that Complaint Department thing is in my kitchen now," Bergie later told me. "I don't get it. I was trying to get rid of the thing and it ended up in my house."

Later, Colette fell for one of the wall-maps, and got into a bidding war with Tom Tercek over it. "Nineteen-dollars-going-once," Chris shouted, "going-twice..."

"Twenty dollars!", Colette hollered. She and her sister Jeanine, in the Yellowstone area for a visit, hurrahed and clapped.

Bergie snuck into the shadows to the right of Benden's stage and gestured wildly in Colette's direction, mouthing No, No, No. I could guess what he was thinking. My God, sixteen bucks for a Genuine All-Metal Buford Machine and a phony hand grenade! YPSS probably paid three for that Buford when we bought it new, during the Eisenhower Administration. And now this!

"Twenty-three-dollars-going-once-going..."

"Twenty-four dollars!", Colette again.

Bergie could stand it no longer. "No!", he said, loudly.

"Hey, hey, you, in the corner", Benden responded, "be quiet. She has her own job." Chris made him laugh so often and so hard that Bergie came down with what he later described as a "Benden Headache".

There seemed to be a low-level-food-fight going on between the Fishing Bridge and Canyon contingents, a sort-of chocolate Cold War, with Clark Bomgaars as the nonaligned but interested third-party nation. Clark acquired a tray full of Carol's baked goods, at auction. He tried to mash a piece in Gretchen Starling's face, or stuff it down the back of her shirt.

The cold war turned hot; a savage wrestling match ensued. It spilled out into the ring in front of Benden's stage, Clark and Gretchen both oblivious to the bemused audience they shared.

We watched in silence. After a long time, Clark seemed to be gaining the upper hand. Benden broke the spell: "Clark! Get off of Gretchen!"

Like one of the degenerate Roman senators in *Spartacus*, Tim Lawlor called out, "How much for the two gladiators?!"

I nudged Tim: "I like the Nubian, but I shall bid on the Teuton." Later, I wished I'd also yelled, "I bid 300 denarii for the barbarian giant!"

They would have fetched a good price. We need not have worried; the auction was a wild success. The wall maps went for fantastic prices. Lane Abke decided that he wanted one, but so did everyone else, and he lost the bidding war that developed over the first. When the second one came up, he decided to get serious. "Do I have an opening bid?"

### Auction - Continued From Page 3

Lane: "Five Dollars!"

Someone else: "Five-fifty..."

Continued on Page 4

Lane: ``Ten dollars!"

He got it, but it cost close to thirty bucks.

I wanted to buy something, but I really couldn't afford to spend more than a few dollars; the way things were going, it looked like I wouldn't be able to afford anything. I decided to try for the contractor's bid form on my station, circa 1960.

``Three-fifty-going-once-going-twice..."

``Four dollars!", I yelled, at the last second.

``Seven dollars!" Tim answered. He went crazy that evening, and ended up spending over sixty.

So much for that idea. I decided to try for a pair of togs, one of the few useful items on the block. Who would have guessed that Billy Maddux and a couple of other people decided that they needed some togs, too? In no time, I was knocked right out of the market.

At last, an item appeared that nobody wanted: one of the very old Remington adding machines. It looked like something you'd see in a museum of Soviet Russian computer technology from the nineteen-fifties. ``And it has," Bergie proudly pointed out, ``over one thousand moving parts." Chris opened the bidding. He was mostly greeted with silence.

Clark stared at the machine with the utmost loathing. Before the new Sharp calculators arrived, he was doing his reports on an identical Remington. ``Three dollars", he blurted out; ``I hate those things!" I imagine he was picturing himself driving a few arrows through it.

Ah, but remember, Clark: Tower is the Station that Time Forgot. I was using one of those only a few weeks ago. ``Three-fifty!", I yelled; ``I hate them worse!"

``Four dollars," Tim Lawlor responded. ``I just want to get to know them."

I ended up buying the thing for four fifty. I passed Clark as I was carrying it to the car, and told him to follow me, I was on my way to throw it into the river. I did intend to do some violence to it, drive the station truck over it, tie it to a length of cable and lower it into Morning Glory Pool, maybe take it home and toss it off the end of the Santa Monica Pier. But I think now that I'm going to take it home and keep it, it's just so goofy-looking.

And so on, into the night. When I left, just after sundown, there was still a pile of stuff left to be sold, and the running total was well over two hundred dollars. They managed to squeeze in a game of Bite-The-Bag after the auction; it must have been about midnight.

I believe I've solved the mystery with which I began this entry. Why is the highway cleanup always so much fun? Because cleaning up the highway has very little to do with it.

*This piece is an excerpt from Scott Herring's ongoing Yellowstone Journal.*

Good Day . . .

## They Talked to the Trees . . .

What do Lane Abke, Ana Gomez, and Jeff Guengerich all have in common?

They have all taken down trees by creatively using motor vehicles. Ask them for details. Jeff was using a tree as an anchor in winching a car out of the ditch. He ended up pulling the tree down on the car he was attempting to save.

Some days go better than others . . .

## Winter Jobs

If you're looking for jobs in the area this winter and need some more ideas contact Bill Berg. We have information from a number of area ski resorts, Flagg Ranch is hiring, Wilderness Cruises out of Seattle is hiring, TW puts folks on in the winter, and Hal and Jean need a baby sitter occasionally. Three boys . . . think about it.

Billy Maddux thought we should put his name in *The Pumper* for winning the Style Award at the highway cleanup. We decided not to do it because next thing you know we'd have to mention that Stephanie Moore and her friend Sam were co-champions in Bite-the-Bag and climbed Eagle Peak, that Clark won an award and that the Fishing Bridge crew won an award, that Pops rode 100 miles in a day on a mountain bike, that Anita and Charlie have had days off where they didn't actually drive anywhere, several of you out there climbed the Middle Teton and Electric Peak, and then we'd have to worry about offending people by forgetting who did what.

Where would it all end? ?? So we're not going to do it... Too risky... Sorry Billy

## Gas Runs Through It

While asking around to find out about the origin of the YPSS steak fry we learned that they began in the 1960's. Charlie Gallagher mentioned that for a couple of years the company arranged for each crew to go out to Stevenson Island for their steak fry. The Yellowstone Park Company boat operators had a tough time getting the YPSS folks back into the boats to get to shore before dark. The logistics of putting together all of those events on an island proved unmanageable after a couple of seasons.

The steak fry has evolved over the years but the purpose is the same: to thank each and every one of you for the long hours and hard work you put in to serve our customers. THANKS.

\* \* \* \* \*

You may have wondered about the numbering of our locations. The service stations are numbered 1 through 9, the shops are 31 to 34, and the office is number 50. Numbers 3 and 4 are missing in the sequence. After working here awhile those numbers tend to stand on their own as the location. Just as surely as # 6 is Canyon, # 3 is still West Thumb and # 4 is still Lake to those of us who were here when we had service stations in those two locations.

The West Thumb station was built in the 1940's as a temporary station. It was closed in 1985 but still lives in form, though not function, in Gardiner. It was moved to Gardiner and is used for storage. Many of the crews that worked there painted murals on the ceiling, some of which rival Coby's work. Many have not weathered well but a couple of them are still in good shape. The West Thumb ceiling ranks right up there with report-envelope-art in YPSS history. Like the Sistine Chapel - but different.

Some of us affectionately referred to Lake # 4 as "Gas With a View". Stop and have a look. Sit out front, soak up the scenery and try to imagine you're trying to work up the gumption to sweep the lanes. The building is still there next to the Lake Hamilton Store. On a nice day you couldn't beat it. On a stormy day it was different. YPSS pulled out of the Lake Service Station at the end of the 1989 season. Ex YPSS Lake employee, now Ranger, Mark Marschall is instrumental in setting up the Lake Station as a NPS backcountry office. In the future you will go there to get backcountry permits for the Lake subdistrict. Mark, with Colette's help, was involved with a split rim that blew off of a rim and ricocheted off of the Hams Store next door, innocent bystanders running for cover.

On with the numbers: Our snowmobile gas locations (We call them Snowgas, but what would that mean to anyone else?) at Old Faithful, Mammoth, and Canyon are numbers 10, 11, and 12 respectively. AND those dorms out there fit into the scheme also: Old Faithful Dorm is # 20, Fishing Bridge is # 21, Canyon is # 23, Mammoth Dorm is # 24, and Grant Village is # 25. If you were paying attention there you noticed a gap. There are some dusty plans on the shelf for the Lake Dormitory, # 22, but it hasn't been built - yet.

