

## **The Photo Not Taken: Pack Creek, SE Alaska 1987**

*In memoriam of Stan Price*

Quiet tidal water of Seymour Canal reflects  
green triangles of Sitka spruce, western hemlock.  
Early morning air heavy with mist descends  
over small meadows filled with tender sedges,  
yellow blossoms of skunk cabbage, and surrounds  
Pack Creek, alive with spawning salmon.

I walk along the narrow gravel spit  
toward a small garden of red raspberries, currants  
and daisies planted by an Admiralty Island homesteader.  
The berry bushes shake, then shake again.  
Puzzled, I continue to gaze into the thick vines  
hoping to catch a glimpse of the shaker  
when a honey blond female grizzly stands up  
paws held high, sniffs the air.

Her huge head turns until she sees me.  
For a long moment our hearts beat together,  
then she drops, ambles slowly around to the creek  
where silver salmon bellies turn  
into summer's feast.

Lynn M. Hansen

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In August of 1987, my husband, 17 year old son and I visited Pack Creek on a wildlife expedition specifically to see grizzly bears and humpback whales. I remember that a special part of our trip was to land on Admiralty Island and walk along the sandy beach to meet the legendary resident Stan Price. He was in his eighties at the time and gave us a tour of his home where he fired up his Honda gasoline generator and showed us 8mm movies of his bears. It was obvious he loved the bears and knew how to coexist peacefully with them.

The bears at that time were feeding on salmon running up Pack Creek. The bears would bite out the egg filled abdomens of the fish then toss them aside.

We also encountered Pest who ambled up close to us, sat down, yawned, scratched her head then got up and went off in the tall grass. It was like something out of central casting, but spontaneous and unrehearsed. Stan told us that Pest had a reputation of being trouble, but we didn't have a problem and we certainly did not have food.

I remember seeing the bears feed and of course the most thrilling moment was when I saw the honey blond grizzly stand up from between the rows of Stan's berry patch and look at me. I just froze there in my tracks and though I had a good camera didn't even think to take a picture. It is a picture in my memory only, but vivid indeed.

I am very glad that Admiralty Island is protected because it is one of those wonderful places to visit and see animals as they live. Priceless indeed. I am now almost 70 years old and I list my experience there as one of the highlights of my life of wildlife viewing experiences.

Lynn M. Hansen