

The FRRS

SANTA TRAINS

By Gordon Wollesen

The Third Annual FRRS Santa Trains were run as scheduled on December 3 and December 10, 1994. As in the past, we used a five-car caboos train consisting of ATSF 999197, SP 4107, MP 13878, WP 428 and UP 903005. Locomotive FR&W 1857 provided the power. All the equipment was outlined with mini Christmas lights. The MP 13878 caboos was once again the power car. A generator was placed on each end of the caboos to provide the electrical power for the cars. A third generator was placed on the locomotive for the lights on the engine.

The weather turned against us just prior to the planned starting date for stringing the lights on the cars and locomotive. Snow and freezing conditions delayed the decorating project. It was decided to put the cabooses in the house to help the snow and ice melt faster. This did somewhat help get rid of the problem. Skip Englert got a few students from the Jim Beckwourth High School to help string some of the lights on the cars. These students could not work very long each day because of their school requirements. What they were able to do was a big help. I custom fabricated all new power distribution cords and outlet boxes for each car. By Saturday morning (12-3) the cars were almost decorated. With the help of some of our out-of-town members, the cabooses were finished by early afternoon. The cars were pulled from the house, set to 3 rail and the 1857 put in the house to complete the decorating. Meanwhile the house Christmas tree was decorated, lights strung on the portable shop fencing, UP business car 105 was spotted in the house and the rear platform decorated and the WP 805A was spotted in the house. I went through each passenger-carrying caboos and lit the heaters, started the generators, and plugged in the power cords. Voila! Everything worked. The locomotive was tied on to the train, the generator started, lights plugged in (everything worked). We were now ready for business. We completed everything 15 minutes before the advertised starting time of 5:30 PM.

All was ready. People began showing up about 5:00 PM ready for a good time. This year Santa stayed inside the engine house to greet everyone. The train made six trips the first night. The turnout was quite small compared to past years. Even so, everyone had a good time. I think the weath-

er was the big factor in the small turnout. It was raining and the snow on the ground turned to very slippery slush. What a mess.

The next Saturday (12-10) we had a private Christmas party with train rides scheduled for 10:00 AM. This group was from Reno and this was their second year of having their Christmas party at the museum. This party was a great success. About 5:00 PM, the train was inspected and the locomotive was tied on. All generators started, power cords plugged in and voila, everything worked. We were ready. People began showing up early as usual. The first three trips were full to capacity. On the last three trips, the train was about 1/3 to 1/2 full. This night we had about 450 to 500 people on hand, which was a very good turnout. Everyone had fun. This time the weather was in our favor with clear cold and hard packed snow. During the week before the second night's Santa Train, it snowed a few inches which made the setting out on the balloon track perfect for photography. The train looked real good.

Now is the time for the "Thanks for your help."

Decorating the train, Christmas Tree and building: Skip Englert, Jim Beckwourth High School, Steve Habeck, Tom Graham, Melissa McGrath, Paul Finnegan and family.

The train crew first night: Steve Habeck, Dave Anderson, Vicki Krois, Ed Warren, Paul Finnegan, Tom Graham.

The train crew second night: Steve Habeck, Jack Palmer, Kerry Cochran, Don Nelson.

Santa Claus: Skip Englert.

The Beanery: covered in Sue Cooper's article elsewhere.

A footnote to the first night's Santa Train (12-3): After the Santa Train festivities ended, all those that worked that evening assembled in the Beanery for an "all hands" meeting under the pretense of talking about how things went. The real reason for the meeting was a surprise birthday party for Tom Graham's daughter, Melissa, who turned "Sweet 16." Tom set this up with me and a few others about a week before. It was a real surprise for Melissa. Tom provided a nice birthday cake. It was all very enjoyable.

Again, we were asked, "Are you going to do it again?" Our answer is, "Yes, the first and second Saturday nights next December."

Beanery Report

By Sue Cooper; Beanery Manager, FRRS Director

The 1994 Operating Season: The Beanery opened on May 28, 1994 and was open every weekend throughout the summer. During the summer operations, the Beanery supplied 489 free lunches to working members and operating crews, and we still made a fair profit.

This year the addition of the steam table made the job much easier, and the new cold food table that will be in next year will make your Beanery the best-equipped snack bar in Portola. If anyone would like to work in the Beanery for a weekend this year, please let me know.

On the December 3 and December 10 Santa trains, the Beanery started to set up at 4:30 PM. We had a heater set up to make it more comfortable for the visitors. The Beanery had coffee, tea, hot cider and hot cocoa, and cookies. This was all free of charge to the visitors and crews. Santa arrived about 5:35 PM and handed out candy canes to all the good little boys and girls. Ken Roller had the model trains going

for everyone to enjoy; we had a couple of "derailments" on it but Ken was on hand nearby to keep it going. Thank you, Ken. The train crews kept the Santa Trains running on time; they came in between runs to warm up. The train looked breathtaking going around the balloon track all lit up. I would like to thank all of the people who helped in the Beanery, and the ladies that donated cookies.

Cookies:

Katie McNeill
Ellen Housen
Edna Ede
Bernice Reid
Marietta Thomsen
Elaine Lucas
Stacey McDonald
Rosalee Canfield
Mary Englert

Peggy Lee
Ann Foster
Leslie Anderson
Irene Bonta
Lena Evans
Lolli Bryan
Kay Betcher
Linda Lippincott
Sue Cooper

Kitchen Helpers:

Edna Ede
Ellen Housen
Diane Wollesen
Karen Wollesen
Lolli Bryan
Sue Cooper
Bruce Cooper
Thank you for supporting the Beanery.