

DUNSMUIR DAYLIGHT A SELLOUT

By DOUG MORGAN

Close to 600 passengers donned their train riding duds to board the second annual Dunsmuir Daylight, a special charter Amtrak train. It is the first time that the Dunsmuir Daylight has been operated by the Portola Railroad Museum and may, bode well for future fund raising excursions for the Society.

For most of the passengers, the daylight ride meant an opportunity to see scenery and track not afforded most people on the regular Amtrak train. The Coast Starlight, as its name implies, operates through this area during starlight time. Laden down with cameras, picnic coolers and enthusiasm, these hardy argonauts seized the moment to explore this historic section of the former Southern Pacific mainline track that snakes past Shasta Lake and through numerous tunnels, over many bridges along the Sacramento River route on its way to Dunsmuir. For a few lucky persons, a full length dome car was a part of the train. This car, a former Great Northern dome has seating for approximately 60 people upstairs and a galley and tables downstairs.

Upon the midday arrival at Dunsmuir, the railroad division point nestled at a beautiful spot in the Sacramento River Canyon, most of the passengers detrained to watch the Dunsmuir Railroad Days Parade and Festival, an annual event of varying size and intensity which has been observed faithfully for many many years.

Some of the passengers chose to stay on the train and explore further up the canyon through the Cantara Loop, famed for its beauty and engineering achievement. This was also the site of the famous derailment which happened several years ago when a car load of pesticides spilled into the Sacramento River killing plant and animal life. Happily, nature is forgiving and the river has recovered fully and looks magnificent. Approximately 121 new passengers also joined the train entourage in Dunsmuir for the shorter "Second Section". All rode to the top of the mountain past Mt. Shasta to the turn around point at Black Butte.

Other intrepid ferroequinologists just hung around the railroad yards, staring longingly at a helper SD-45 parked next to one of the few surviving active turntables, all hoping for some action. The only action was two freight trains that forced the Daylight into a siding just outside of Dunsmuir which eventually "ran around" the Daylight and through Dunsmuir while a throng of observers clicked shutters and whirled camcorders to the surprise of the train crews who felt a twinge of celebrity as their locomotives rumbled past.

Moments after the freights passed, the Dunsmuir Daylight appeared from around the bend and the crowds surged aboard for the ride back home.

On board the crew consisted of Train Director Doug Morgan with able assistant David Dewey, who worked closely with the real workers headed up by Train Manager Steve Habeck and his trusty side kick, Vic Neves.

Car hosts were Dave and Julie Anderson, Hank Stiles, Meg Evans, Terry Decottignies, Kerry Cochran, Frank Beavers, Steve and Norma Hayes, Gil and Janet Domingues, Jim Ley, Jay Mills and his fiance Daneen, Ed Powell, Linda Dewey, Melodee Bagdazian and Doug Fleesher of the American Cancer Society all did yeoman tasks. For those hosts with dedicated hearts (or absolutely no brains) who selected Sacramento and Roseville as their on duty points, experienced the "long day" with a 6 AM work start and arrival of the train back to the Capital at 10:30 PM.

Overall, the car host performed magnificently under adversities of failing air conditioning in two cars, overused toilets, lack of water in some cars and train delays. No matter the job, whether holding car signs, answering questions, punching tickets, boarding or de-boarding passengers, no task was too great for this crew. No more can be asked.

High in the basement of the dome car, Train Director Morgan shouted orders to his followers who had the good sense and experience to ignore him. Nearby Norm and Barbara Holmes did a land office business selling souvenirs which proves a point that there is much to be said about locking up 560 adults with money in their pockets in a moving steel snake. Up in the Penthouse, Norma Hayes doted over her passengers spoiling them with good service, sweet rolls, fruit, juices and the like the whole day long. But her sterling performance couldn't be pulled off without the quick-hands presentation offered by Vickie Krois who womanned the galley beneath the dome with the help of Linda Dewey and Janet Dominguez.

Also the contributions of John Walker must be acknowledged. In an experiment using a station host that did not ride the train, John greeted and organized the passengers in Marysville and had them ready for boarding when the train arrived.

In Chico the second largest group was greeted by Assistant Train Director Dewey, who pulled double duty as grocery and crowd coordinator.

Amtrak struggled as well with the delays, a large crowd, and mechanical failures. The Amtrak crew must have said "I'm sorry" in 15 languages including DOS. The car management, hosts and Amtrak crew worked well together and as a complete team.

This was, without a doubt, the most audacious undertaking for this organization in terms of total sales accomplishment, marketing effort, and tactical coordination, ever. And although far from perfect, proved a great point that when given a task, good leadership and support, this organization can deliver the goods. Everyone involved should take a bow and attempt to break their arms off patting themselves on the back.

NEW FRRS LIFE MEMBERS

The following people are the newest FRRS Family Life Members: (157 Members to Date)

Jame Baker
Don Griffith
James and Sharyl Leggate
Mike Mucklin

RAILFAN DAY

Don't forget the 12th Annual Railfan Photographer's Day, Railroadiana Show and Swap Meet.

Saturday, September 13, 1997

