

reporter's notebook

Our intrepid reporter guzzles liquor, intimidates governors, and discovers...

Nobody yelled "All aboard!" I was looking forward to that, too. Here it was, my first train ride, and I was lucky enough to draw Saturday's ceremonial run of the Willamette Valley Express. Maybe I should have been thankful for that in itself, but I had two expectations besides.

One, I wanted to hear a conductor with a pocket watch yell "All aboard!"
Two, I wanted to get drunk off my ass.

The trip was half successful.

State and Amtrak officials planned the run to gain publicity for the new Portland-to-Eugene train, filling the six whistlestops with a Dixieland band, balloons and politicians.

"The history people thought railroads were dead as a dodo — but they weren't," Gov. Vic Atiyeh told a crowd of 400 Very Important Free-loaders in Portland. The governor's wife wasted a bottle of champagne christening the train, the crowd cheered, and

everybody boarded the train for a free ride to Eugene.

On board, passengers found plenty of complimentary champagne to make up for the wasted bottle. Train attendants distributed foldable paper engineer's caps so everybody could look silly while feeling happy.

And then tell all their friends what *fun* it is to ride the train. I had fun.

Putting on my Joe Rossi face, I walked up to the governor, shoved a microphone up his nose and asked him how the state could foot one-fifth of the bill — \$600,000 — for the train's 11-month trial run when everything else in the state budget was getting hacked.

I asked him *nicely*, mind you — the governor's wife was still holding that broken champagne bottle.

"It's a contract that we had concluded before all of this came along," he said. "We just don't think it's appropriate to cut back on contracts that we've agreed to."

Life in the Fast Train



Photo by Dennis Tachibana

Feeling happy that I had asked the Tough Question, I retreated to my seat (oooh, the legroom), balanced a plastic champagne glass in my hand and looked around.

Amtrak brought out the Big Guns for this trip — four brand-new, million-dollar, double-decker Superliner passenger coaches. Upstairs it looked like a jet interior; downstairs the toilets lurked. Two holes were cut out by the sink: one marked "Trash," the other "Sanitary Napkins and

Disposable Diapers." Both emptied into the same bin.

I emptied a few rum and Cokes when I returned to my seat. The can of Coke cost 50 cents at the downstairs concession stand. The rum I had bought the night before.

If I had not planned ahead, the Amtrak folks would have stiffed me a buck for each can of beer. Higher-octane premium brews cost \$1.25. How sobering.

But not sobering enough,

thank God. By the time the train arrived in Eugene, I had neatly consumed two-thirds of a flask of rum, along with a dollar's worth of Coke. My day was over — I would happily stagger to my car and violate a few driving laws before I made it home.

The Portland free-loaders were not so lucky. They had to endure a few more speeches before they were allowed to head back.

By bus.

Story by MIKE LEE

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University offers coast photography workshop

A practical photography workshop will be offered Sept. 24-28 at Heceta Head lighthouse on the Oregon Coast by the University Museum of Art.

The workshop is designed for intermediate and advanced photographers and focuses on learning by doing, according to Ben Kerns, director of the museum's Photography at Oregon Gallery.

Students will work at three photographic activities: personal photographic analysis and problem solving, the nude as a portrait and collage/montage image making.

The workshop runs from 8

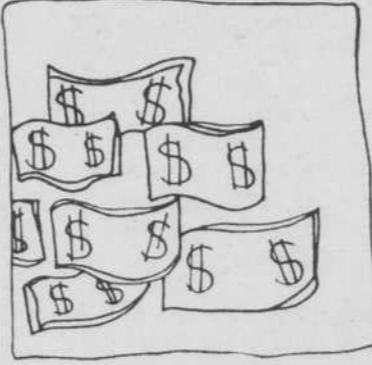
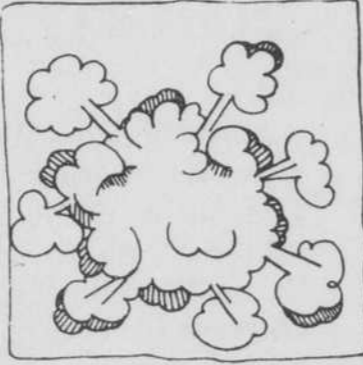
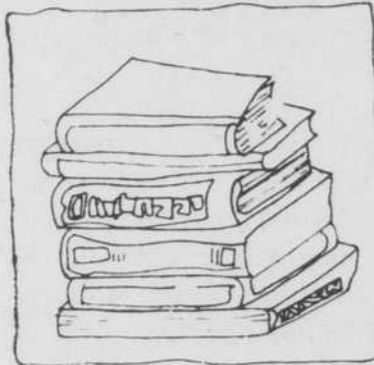
p.m. Sept. 24 to 5 p.m. Sept. 28. The \$125 workshop fee includes tuition, model fees and dormitory accommodations. Food is not included in the fee, but a kitchen will be available to prepare simple meals.

Persons who register before Sept. 1 receive a \$15 discount on the workshop fee. The session is limited to 20 participants.

Students will be able to work with five models in addition to the natural landscape of the ocean cliffs and coastal forest. Limited facilities for developing and contact printing will also be available.

For further information, call Kerns at 683-4269.

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