

# OPERATION TROLLEY MADNESS

## 300

*Astoria High School's photography class had some fun last month riding the Astoria Riverfront Trolley and snapping away like mad.*



Photo by Don Frank Photography

### Story by MATT LOVE

The motorman rang the bell, blew the whistle, cranked some levers, and Old 300, the Astoria Riverfront Trolley, sputtered to life and began moving east down the tracks. It was 9:06 in the morning on a sunny Wednesday in September.

Camera shutters started clicking. More clicking. It became a fusillade of documentation of anything and everything trolley.

Operation Trolley Madness, a joint creative mission between a writer (me), conductor Dan Schofield, motorman Craig Yamasaki, the Astoria High School photography class, their teacher Mickey Cereghino, and two crack photographers, Don Frank and Leigh Oviatt, was underway. The mission parameters were: set a world record for most photographs taken by a high school photography class from a moving vintage trolley and capture heretofore unseen, unimagined images to accompany my essay trying to inspire more people to volunteer for this wonderful attraction, which is entirely volunteer-driven.

The plan was to make three stops, jump off at each stop, dash around, shoot trolley photographs, jump back on, and then turn around back to the barn near the Port of Astoria.

We had the trolley all to ourselves by special generous arrangement. We had one hour to accomplish the mission.

Operation Trolley Madness was conceived in May after I rode the trolley for the first time. I couldn't believe how much fun it was, seeing Astoria and the river from this slow-motion position. I loved admiring all the polished wood and gleaming metal of the trolley's interior, meeting tourists and locals, watching all the smiles, and listening to the conductor narrating the city's colorful history with panache. And it only cost one dollar! That's the best entertainment bargain in Oregon!



Photo by Caleb Hale



Photo by Seren Rain

**VOLUNTEER**  
To find out more about volunteering for the Astoria Riverfront Trolley, go online at [www.old300.org](http://www.old300.org) or call 503-325-6311



Photo by Don Frank Photography

The trolley operation is carried out by 48 dedicated motormen and conductors, including Dan and Craig, who logged 86 and 84 trips respectively during the season, number one and two among their colleagues.

Why do they do it? Why so many countless hours of volunteering?

"You get to interact with a diverse group of people from all over the world," said Dan, now in his eighth year as a conductor. "You get to become an ambassador for Astoria and see everyone happy."

"You meet a lot of interesting people and get to showcase the area," said Craig, now in his second year of trolley duties. "I wasn't much a natural talker and then I got into it," he added, "and found it enjoyable to talk about the history."

The three stops went off without a hitch, and Dan and Craig joined in the photography fun. Students attacked the trolley from every conceivable angle and unbinged to show me their photos. Their giddiness was palpable—and infectious. At one point, I saw Mickey played

on the sidewalk trying to get the perfect original trolley shot. It was madness all right, and Mickey had caught the fever, bad. He was burning up. We all were.

*Matt Love lives in Astoria and teaches at Astoria High School. He is the author/editor of 14 books about Oregon, including "A Nice Piece of Astoria: A Narrative Guide" and "The Great Birthright: An Oregon Novel." They are available at coastal bookstores and through [www.nestuccaspiritpress.com](http://www.nestuccaspiritpress.com)*



Photo by Caleb Hale



Photo by Jan Kreibich



Photo by Maia Mahoney



Photo by Claressa Peatrovich



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