

Jerry Mac Mullen
382 Glorietta Blvd
Coronado CA 92118

Customary rates F114-1A

ORDEAL BY AMTRAK

Promptly at 11:50 a. m. Amtrak train No. 11 rolled out of the dingy but still impressive old King Street Station in Seattle on its thrice-a-week run to Portland, San Francisco, Santa Barbara, Los Angeles and San Diego. It was a nice looking train of a dozen coaches, pulled by two Diesel locomotives -- which seemed to be carrying economy a bit far, considering that the Siskiyous lay ahead. Forty miles further on, after the first of many mysterious, unscheduled stops, we rolled into Tacoma -- five minutes late.

Amtrak had made much of the fact that the cars all were refurbished, and boasted new, wall-to-wall carpeting. They did not mention the fact that unless you want to sit up all night, you must make a sleeping-car reservation a week in advance, which we had been unable to do, nor the fact that the passing scenery would have been more enjoyable had the car windows been clean. And let's just overlook the fact that, in the wash-room, the soap-dispensers were empty.

A dignified, white-uniformed waiter came through the train to announce, in the elegant style of the bygone name-trains, that luncheon now was being served in the Dining-car. So we started off and, not being too hungry, came to a halt when we entered the Snack-car, four cars behind the diner. The coffee was good, the sandwiches acceptable and the waiter friendly. He smilingly revealed that lots of passengers had their mid-day meal there, and saved the more elegant diner for night. It sounded like good advice.

The schedule said we'd make Portland at 3:50 p.m., and sure enough

