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****PRESS RELEASE****

The Cable Car Bell Ringing Contest is July 9

Be there with bells on to witness three past champions rhythmically face-off for the title crown!

San Francisco— The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA), which manages all transportation in the city, including the Municipal Railway (Muni), will host the 52nd Cable Car Bell Ringing Contest **Thursday, July 9, at noon in Union Square.**

“This competition is a Muni tradition that dates back to 1955,” said Ed Reiskin SFMTA’s Director of Transportation. “Over those 60 years several grips and conductors have been crowned champion – and a select few have taken the crown more than once. This year we’ll witness three past champions meld physicality, rhythm and improvisation for a chance at their 3rd or 4th crown.”

Trini Whittaker has held the title of World Champion Cable Car Bell Ringer since 2012. He’ll reprise his clear as a bell winning performance this year. But Whittaker will face stiff clapper competition from two three-time winners: Ken Lunardi (1997, 2002, 2006) and Leonard Oats (2007, 2008, 2009).

In fact, expect Mr. Lunardi to pull out all the bells and whistles. The 35 year SFMTA employee has spent the last three-decades as a cable car gripman and will soon retire, so he’s looking to claim the crown and a place in bell ringing history.

A total of eight challengers will demonstrate their bell-ringing prowess on motorized cable car #52 that will park at iconic Union Square. Alongside these professional heavy hitters will be amateur bell ringers who will use their syncopated wrist actions to vie for a separate crown.

Trophies will be awarded to the top three contestants in each competing class. Cash, hotel stays, restaurant certificates and show tickets are just some of the winning prizes donated by Union Square merchants and San Francisco Travel partners. Cash prizes, for the amateur contenders, will be donated to charitable organizations.

And following the historic trend, mistress of ceremony duties will once again be graciously performed by comedienne Debi Durst. Entertainment will be provided by cable car division band Freeman – featuring Abel & Frisco Project.

The 52nd World Champion Cable Car Bell Ringing competition is sponsored by the SFMTA and supported by partnerships with local business. Special thanks to presenting sponsor Ghirardelli Chocolate Company. Major support is provided by Union Square Business Improvement District and San Francisco Travel with generous contributions by Friends of the Cable Car Museum, iHeartRadio, Tower Tours and Hotel Union Square.

For more information on contestants, rules and judges please visit:
<https://www.sfmta.com/calendar/52nd-cable-car-bell-ringing-contest>

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Established by voter proposition in 1999, the SFMTA, a department of the City and County of San Francisco, oversees the Municipal Railway (Muni), parking and traffic, bicycling, walking and taxis. With five modes of transit, Muni has approximately 700,000 passenger boardings each day. Over 1 million people get around this city each day and rely on the SFMTA to ensure safe and reliable travel by transit, walking, bicycling, taxi and driving.

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