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****PRESS RELEASE****

SFMTA Announces the Winners of the 53rd Cable Car Bell Ringing Contest

Leonard Oats takes home the grand prize! Cassandra Griffin becomes first woman finalist to compete for Bell Ringing Champ!

San Francisco— The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA), which manages all transportation in the city, including the Municipal Railway (Muni), today announced that Leonard Oats was declared World Champion of the 53rd Muni Cable Car Bell Ringing Contest, held today in Union Square. The contest had two divisions, one for cable car grips and conductors and another for amateur bell-ringers competing on behalf of the charity of their choice.

“On behalf of the SFMTA Board of Directors, I want to offer our well-earned congratulations to Leonard Oats,” said Tom Nolan, SFMTA’s Chairman of the Board of Directors. “The competition showcased seasoned bell-ringing talent and welcomed newcomers we can’t wait to see more of in the coming years.”

The winners in the division for cable car crew members were: First Place, Leonard Oats; Second Place, Byron Cobb; and Third Place, Trini Whittaker.

Cable Car conductor, Cassandra Griffin became the first woman finalist to compete.

“We are so proud of Ms. Griffin and her incredible performance. As she stepped into her role as the first woman to compete as a finalist, she has made herself a model for others who will follow in her footsteps. We look forward to what she has in store for us in future competitions,” said Ed Reiskin, SFMTA Director of Transportation.

The amateur winners competing for charity were: First Place, Freska, representing 96.5 KOIT; Second Place: Brandon Mudd of Comcast Spotlight; and Third Place, St. John/Producer and Bay Area personality at Movin’ 99.7 Now. Their prizes will be donated to the following charities: victims of the last month’s Orlando tragedy, United Way, and AIDS Walk, respectively.

The Cable Car Bell Ringing Contest was presented by Ghirardelli Chocolate Company and the SFMTA. The event was supported by the merchants and members of San Francisco Travel, The Union Square Business Improvement District, San Francisco Recreation and Park and the Cable Car Museum.

Special thanks to our Gold level sponsors: Omni San Francisco Hotel, Sam's Cable Car Lounge, New Delhi Restaurant, The San Francisco Dungeon and SFMOMA.

“San Francisco is truly a global village. It is also a wonder of this world and Cable Car actually represents one of these wonders, because it brings everyone together for a celebration for something authentic and something that is very, very characteristic of the beauty of San Francisco. I am really proud to be a sponsor and a participant in this celebration,” said Ranjan Dey, President of New Delhi Restaurant.

Additional generous sponsors include 7D Experience, Aardvark Books, Alcatraz Cruises, Argonaut Hotel, Axiom Hotel, Bay Aquarium, Beach Blanket Babylon, Burritt Room + Tavern, CityPASS, Cobb's Comedy Club, Electric Tour Company, First Crush Restaurant & Bar, Fog Harbor Fish House, GoCar Tours, Hornblower Cruises, Hotel Grace, Hotel Zelos, Marker Hotel, Mystic Hotel by Charlie Palmer, Pier 2620 Hotel Fisherman's Wharf, Puccini & Pinetti Italian Grill, Punchline, Red & White Fleet, San Francisco Fire Engine Tours & Adventures, San Francisco Giants, San Francisco Marriott Marquis, San Francisco Symphony, Senza Hotel, Sheraton Fisherman's Wharf, Sports Basement, Taj Campton Place, The Contemporary Jewish Museum, Wild SF Tours and Winery Collective.

For more information on contestants, rules and judges please visit: <https://www.sfmta.com/calendar/53rd-cable-car-bell-ringing-contest>

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To help with your travel plans to special events in the City of San Francisco, this release will be updated on a weekly basis. Whether you are a visitor or a local resident in the City, we hope you have an enjoyable weekend!

For more information on Muni service, please call the San Francisco Customer Service Center at 311 or visit www.sfmta.com. For additional information on Muni's Accessible Services Program, please call (415) 701-4485 or TTY (415) 701-4730.

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