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# Red Car Trolley is Closing

By Mark Kavanagh



Disney Red Car Trolley No. 717 is decorated for Christmas as it poses on Hollywood Boulevard at Disney's California Adventure Park on December 13, 2024, two months before its expected permanent closure on February 9, 2025. (Mark Kavanagh photograph)

“Welcome Aboard the Red Car Trolley. For your safety, please remain seated, keep your hands arms and legs inside, and watch your children. Para su seguridad, por favor, manténgase sentado, con los brazos, manos, pies y piernas dentro del tranvía y cuiden a sus niños. Gracias.” Now the trolley can depart the station.

The Red Car Trolley at Disney's California Adventure Park opened on July 15, 2012. But sadly, just like its prototype, the Pacific Electric Railway, it will become a memory when it closes on February 8, 2025. But what is the Red Car Trolley?

The Trolley was part of a reimagining of the California Adventure Park, which had a rough start when it opened as a  
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# Oregon Electric Railway Historical Society

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Membership is based on a calendar year. All memberships expire on Dec. 31<sup>st</sup>, with renewal due by January 1st. The OERHS is a non-profit 501-C-3 corporation, so dues are tax deductible.

Categories			
Active	\$ 30	Sustaining	\$ 250
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Contributing	\$ 75	Benefactor	\$ 1000
Supporting	\$100		

## Mission Statement

The mission of the Oregon Electric Railway Historical Society, Inc. Is to preserve the regional heritage of electric railway transportation as a living resource for the benefit of the present and future generations.

To fulfill this mission the Society will promote:

- The study of electric railways, their physical equipment, properties, and operations, devoting special attention to the electric railways of western Oregon.
- The procurement and preservation of historic electric railway equipment, materials, and property.
- The display, interpretation, and operation of surviving historic equipment, materials and properties.

By Laws, Article II, 11/14/20

## Official Notice

The Transfer is published quarterly as the official publication of the OERHS, a state and federally recognized not-for-profit institution and operator of the Oregon Electric Railway Museum at Brooks, Oregon and the Willamette Shore Trolley between Lake Oswego and Portland.

The views expressed herein are solely those of the individual writers identified and of the editor only and may not represent the views or policies of the Society, its Board of Trustees, Officers, or Members.

Articles, photos, and letters for publication are always welcome. Please email to either [transfer@oerhs.org](mailto:transfer@oerhs.org) or [trolley503@frontier.com](mailto:trolley503@frontier.com)

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## Do you want to drive a trolley?

You can be a Motorman, Conductor, Tour Guide, help restore trolleys or participate in more great activities. Want to learn to operate a 100-year-old trolley or an electric locomotive? If you are interested in training to be a motorman, conductor, or station agent at the museum contact Mark Kavanagh at (480) 334-2352. If you wish to volunteer for the Willamette Shore Trolley, call David Harold or Jan Zweerts at (503) 697-7436. No experience is necessary just a passion for trolleys! We can train you in any volunteer position that meets your interest.

## How we deliver *The Transfer* and *The Monthly Pass*

Our quarterly newsletter *The Transfer* is published electronically in full high-resolution color. Members can view and download current and previous issues at the OERHS website: [oregontrolley.com/transfer](http://oregontrolley.com/transfer). You will also find an archive here of previous issues going back to the 1970s. It is easy to print copies on your personal color or black & white printer. By default, members receive email notification as soon as an issue is available. We believe you will appreciate the higher quality pictures that this process will provide to all the interesting photos that accompany our articles.

For those who prefer a printed copy of *The Transfer* a black and white version will be mailed to your home address by request. Please send this preference to Secretary Mark Kavanagh, Oregon Electric Railway Historical Society, 3995 Brooklake Rd. NE, Brooks, OR 97303 or send him an email at [mark@oerhs.org](mailto:mark@oerhs.org).

When needed, the OERHS also updates members on events at the Oregon Electric Museum and the Willamette Shore Trolley in a short email newsletter called *The Monthly Pass*. We must have your correct email address for distribution of both newsletters. We respect your privacy and will only use your email address to send a single notification when the latest issue of *The Transfer* is ready. We do not send promotional material or advertising.

## Red Car Closing

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second gate at the Disneyland Resort in Anaheim on February 8, 2001.

The Trolley is a 1-meter gauge tramway with two new trolley cars built for the line by Brookville Equipment in Pennsylvania. In addition to modern streetcars Brookville has built other retro trolley cars as well as modern streetcars, including ones for Portland Streetcar.

The Pacific Electric Railway "Hollywood" cars inspired the two Disney cars. Car 623 was inspired by the 600-series that the St. Louis Car company built for the PE. It uses the overall red scheme used by the PE when the cars were first delivered. The number 623 symbolizes the month and year Walt Disney first

arrived in southern California (June 1923).

Car 717 was inspired by the 700-series built by the J.G.Brill Company for the PE. Its paint scheme uses the PE Art Deco Wings design. The number 717 represents the opening date of Disneyland, July 17, 1955. The real PE 717 still exists and operates at the Southern California Railway Museum in Perris, CA.

Both cars use batteries for propulsion. The batteries can be recharged at the Buena Vista Street stop or in the car barn. There is an overhead wire along the "revenue" part of the alignment, and the trolleys have a reversible trolley pole that runs on the wire. However, the wire is not connected to a power source



*Mickey Mouse will soon wave goodbye to riders as the Red Car ride falls victim to Disney's current focus on the Marvel Comic Universe instead of nostalgia.*



*Red cars 707 and 623 make for a dramatic nighttime scene as they pass each other on Hollywood Boulevard on December 24, 2015. The passing track at the Hollywood Boulevard stop is the only location where cars can pass each other during two-car operation. Note the different livery worn by each trolley. (Mark Kavanagh photograph)*



*Disney Red Car Trolley interiors feature period-looking car cards advertising the shops along Buena Vista Street and Hollywood Boulevard, the two streets traversed by the line. (Mark Kavanagh photograph)*

but is for show only. This keeps the authenticity of a trolley line without the electrical risk. Car interiors feature faux wooden seats and period-looking car cards advertising the "shops" along Buena Vista Street and Hollywood Blvd.

During "revenue" operation, the pole must be raised and be in trailing position to operate. However, the interlock can be bypassed to move the cars in and out of the carbarn.

The Trolley has a traditional bell, but the operator only needs to press the button once to give a double-ding. The Trolley also has the standard PE e-flat air horn. Like the bell, a single tug on the rope will give a two-toot whistle.

The operating controls look very close to an authentic trolley, with some changes, like the air pressure gauge, which is the battery voltage gauge. The top speed for the cars is four mph, blazing fast. With people always walking in front of the Trolley, anything faster would be dangerous.

The Trolley runs with a two-person crew: a motorman and a

conductor. The conductor gives the Trolley's history and information about the theme park. Both are dressed in traditional trolley crew uniforms.

The route of the Red Car Trolley starts at the park entrance at Buena Vista Street. The conductor turns the pole around here as it is a stub terminal. The Trolley then runs down the single-track in the middle of Buena Vista Street to a stop at Carthay Circle, the Park's hub. From there, the car runs down the middle of Hollywood Blvd to a passing track with a stop called Hollywood Blvd. This is the only location where the two cars can pass each other during two-car operation. However, Buena Vista bound trolleys do not stop for passengers here. The car then continues and turns onto Sunset Boulevard, where it terminates at the Hyperion Theater. Originally, the Sunset Blvd. Station did not exist; the



*The operating controls in Disney's Red Cars look very similar to authentic controllers, with some changes including a gauge for voltage. (Mark Kavanagh photograph)*



Above: Trolley 717 is bound for the car barn as it heads backstage through doors in the middle of the Avengers Campus (inset is of our intrepid reporter). Below: The two-bay car barn is slated for demolition. This view was taken on December 4, 2012, before the Avengers attraction was built (Mark Kavanagh photographs)

car terminated further down the line in front of the Hollywood Tower Hotel, aka Tower of Terror (ToT). However, when the ToT was converted to Guardians of the Galaxy: Mission Breakout, the Trolley did not fit the

theme of the Avengers campus. Revenue service was then cut back to the Hyperion Theater.

Track beyond the theater remains in use, as it continues to the backstage area and the two-track car barn. But it is not accessible to the public. The wire used to end at the hotel, but is now cut to the theater.

It is unclear why the line is named Route 98, but it is speculated that it comes from the year California Adventure first broke ground, 1998.

So why is Disney ending the Red Car Trolley? In a word, progress. As in words of Eddie Valiant from the movie, *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*: "Nobody's gonna drive this lousy freeway when they can take the Red Car for a nickel". Disney is now playing the role of Judge Doom, who in the movie was buying the Red Car to shut it down and build freeways. But in this

case, the Trolley Barn is in the way of expanding the Marvel's Avengers Campus, so it will be knocked down.

Disney has stated they will save one (not yet designated) car and park it at the Buena Vista Street stop for photo ops. The fate of the second car is not known at this time.

Disney has not said that the Trolley is gone forever, but no bets are being placed on its return. It seems likely that Park operations will want to remove the overhead wire, as it prevents tall parade floats from running along Hollywood Boulevard

The author has had several opportunities to ride the Red Car Trolley in December of 2012, 2014, and 2024. It will be missed as a leisurely way to get around the front of the park. Here are videos taken along the route. 🚲

- Trolley ride in 2012: <https://youtu.be/oERy90AuBB4>
- Trolley Ride at night in 2014: <https://youtu.be/bDbFeTkcZ-U>
- Trolley Ride to Sunset Blvd in 2024 in 4K: <https://youtu.be/9PSffQIFsJU>
- Trolley ride to Buena Vista St in 2024 in 4K: <https://youtu.be/A-u3lrVxNpc>





Above: Car 717 is at the busy Buena Vista Street terminal, which is the entrance to Disney's California Adventure Park, on December 15, 2024.  
Below: No. 623 in front of the Art of Animation Building on Hollywood Boulevard on December 24, 2015. (Mark Kavanagh photographs)





Alois Halemba's daughter Rosa obtained the body of streetcar No. 707 after it was retired in 1937 and used it as a gift shop in Aloha dedicated to the memory of her father. Other car bodies in this series became chicken coops, diners, and a used car sales office. (colorized by the author)

## The Halemba Story

Bill Hayes

In 1931 the Pacific Northwest Public Service Company, a subsidiary of a holding company called the Central Public Service Corporation, succeeded the Portland Electric Power Company (PEPCo), which operated Portland's streetcar system. This firm sold a large amount of stock to the public, using their employees as salespeople. They, in turn, talked their relatives and friends into buying stock at a time when few could afford the risk. In due time the securities were found to be nearly worthless.

One of these employee-salesmen was Alois J. Halemba, a streetcar conductor out of Ankeny Division, who lived with his wife, Paulina and daughter Rosa at 612 Hancock Street

Alois became despondent over his part in this fiasco, which had cost

many people their life savings, and on the night of February 19, 1932, rather than face those whom he had unwillingly cheated, he committed suicide. He stopped his inbound Rose City Park streetcar on the Burnside bridge, hung his cap and coat on the

handbrake handle, walked to the bridge rail and jumped into the Willamette River. There were no passengers on the car.

In February 1982, 50 years later, I visited Halemba's daughter, Rosa. Now 75 years old and a spinster, I



Bill Hayes found this cartoon in a 1940s Railroad Magazine. Interestingly, it says Rosa used the trolley as a greenhouse rather than a gift shop.



Rosa Halemba and her mother, who passed away in 1952, operated this little store in Aloha. The vestibule of car 707 can be seen beside the store. No. 707 was a standard gauge PAYE (pay as you enter) car operating out of the Sellwood Division. It was usually assigned to the Hawthorne or Richmond lines. Since Rosa’s father Alois worked out of the Savier, and Ankeny, carbarns he would not have served on this particular car.



This ten-cent fare commutation ticket was issued by the Pacific Northwest Public Service Company during the 1930s. Its connection with the Central Public Service Company can be seen in the design on the background and back side. The PNPS Company name was not popular with the public so in 1933 it was changed back to PEPCo.

found her to be in poor health, and living alone in a small apartment in Hillsboro. In retirement she wrote an occasional column for the *Hillsboro Argus*.

When I told her that I remembered seeing a cartoon about her trolley in *Railroad Magazine* she kindly let me borrow original photos for Dick Thompson to copy.

Rosa said that she had sent the magazine a manuscript, but they had rejected her story as being “too sad.”

In the late 1930s she obtained the body of car 707 to use as a gift shop in Aloha. It was demolished in the 1940s, along with the little building it adjoined, in order to make room for a theater parking lot. 🚲



Conductor Alois is in charge of Montavilla Line car 557 in this 1920s photograph.





Conductor Alois Halemba posing in front of his home on 793 Northrup Street.



The Halemba apartment still exists at what is now 2379 NW Northrup Street. In the previous picture he was standing where the little tree is today.



This weekly pass was issued two weeks before Alois Halemba's death. Note that it was not good on the interurban or Park Rose lines. Portland citizens accused the Pacific Northwest Public Service Company of bleeding off profits for the benefit of Eastern stockholders.

# Holiday Sparkles 2024

John Nagy

The Holiday Sparkles event at Powerland Heritage Park is held each year to show our appreciation to the community for supporting us. For that reason, it is free of charge (although donations are welcome). Drive-through visitors got a chance to see the buildings, grounds and equipment decorated with holiday lights and displays. They could also stop at Santaland to enjoy two family photo areas, a cocoa bar, and a visit with Santa.

Holiday Sparkles, held over three successive December weekends, was a great success this year and almost as many visitors came to see the Grinch as they did Santa! Over 2000 cars went through the gates this year, so why not plan to bring your family and



The Brooks Depot Museum at Powerland Heritage Park, operated by the Brooks Historical Society, was nicely decorated for Holiday Sparkles. (John Nagy photograph)

friends down next December to experience this popular free event.

We extend a big thank you to the OERHS volunteers who decorated and staffed this event! 🙏



Those attending Holiday Sparkles 2024 voted Santa's Workshop the favorite display. It was created by the Branch 15 Early Day Gas Engine & Tractor Association. (John Nagy photograph)



*The Railway Express Agency never had it so good, as a herd of illuminated dinosaurs hurries to pull the baggage wagon to the depot in time to meet arriving trains. (John Nagy photograph).*



*A firetruck from the Oregon Fire Service Museum at Powerland Heritage Park, festooned with hundreds of Christmas tree lights, made a colorful addition to Holiday Sparkles 2024. (John Nagy photograph)*

## Notes from the Carbarn & Shop

Pete Manuele

**H**appy New Year from the occupants of the carbarn to our membership. Here is an update on the maintenance and restoration of our collection.

**No. 48 Blackpool tram** - winter maintenance is being performed on our main passenger transporter. The running gear will be inspected, cleaned, greased and oiled by the time the 2025 season opens. Touch-up work is being done on the exterior as well as repairs to some deteriorated wood pieces. Skirting on the A and B sides, and center skirtings, are being restored in the shop. It is our goal to have all the skirting finished and installed by season opening in May.

Board member Michelle Veri has expressed an interest in reupholstering the seats in the 48. I have been in contact with the curator at National Crich Tramway Museum at Crich, Derbyshire, United Kingdom. The Crich museum owns sister car No. 49.



*Tram No. 48 retains the appearance it had when retired in Blackpool in 1962 in this picture taken in front of the Trolley Park carbarn in 1992. (Richard Thompson photograph)*

As near as I have been able to determine, these cars are identical, with the exception of the upholstery pattern. We have been supplied with pertinent information regarding the upholstery materials and will be following up on obtaining materials to

reupholster the first-floor seats on our No. 48. We hope to undertake upholstery as time permits.

**No. 1187 Sydney open car** – Controller contacts and relays are being repaired and serviced in anticipation that this trolley will be used more in weekend operations and during Steamup.

**201/210 Oporto car** – continuing evaluation for backup service.

**No. 401 Freight Motor** – continuing work on doors and side panels.

**No. 1455 Snow Sweeper** – work continues on the B end. Metal support rods are ready for welding to existing rods. Greg Bonn is still sandblasting coupler parts. We hope to have them installed after the support rods are installed.

New wood flooring has been sourced and will be installed after completion of framing and bracing of the coupler parts. Work on the entry doors and freight door are ongoing.

The evaluation of the yard lead and yard tracks continues. John Nagy is working on getting a plan together for the extension of Track One to hold our promised Max Type I light rail vehicle once it arrives at the museum

The shop, as usual, is keeping busy with winter projects. Rick Lucia and I are working on repairing the skirting that fits on Blackpool tram 48. These



*Although our shop cannot be seen in this aerial view of Powerland Heritage Park the Carbarn is at upper right and Hopmere Station at lower left. The Oregon Fire Service Museum is middle left. (Courtesy Apple Maps)*



*Ever-enthusiastic museum volunteer Rick Lucia has just finished putting our Club Car golf cart back into operation. (John Nagy photograph)*

skirts were damaged during a derailment at the old Trolley Park in Glenwood and were never repaired. The skirts were not reinstalled prior to moving the 48 to Lake Oswego for operation on the Willamette Shore Line to avoid possible further damage in the move. Both tram entry points had skirting located behind the stairs and it is our goal is to have them all finished and reinstalled prior to the 2025 season opening.

Gene Fabryka is working on repair and painting of the advertising sign boards located in Aussie car No. 1187. He is also repairing slats on the seats that have been worn out or otherwise damaged.

Gene is also continuing work on the Gresham equipment shelter. Concrete footings for the shelter are curing and should be ready to accept the framing beams once the weather becomes more amenable to outside work. Suzi Jones has been assisting in preparation of the beams for priming and painting.

The westside track crossing, commonly known as Spegel Crossing, is slated to have two crossing gates

installed in the near future. Greg Bonn has been working on the crossing arm

mechanisms and designing the posts and crossbucks for this project.

This will be a much-needed addition for safety as there is a lot of foot and vehicular traffic crossing the track here.

Progress has been slow, but steady, on the restoration and construction of the entry doors and the freight door for Portland Traction Company snow sweeper No. 1455. The remaining window frames are being painted by Joyce Nagy.

John Nagy reports that after five years of sitting in storage, member Rick Lucia has managed to get the museum’s Club Car golf cart back in service. New tires, batteries, and a little TLC did the trick.

This cart comes in handy when our EZ-GO cart is loaded with equipment and we need someone to run to the shop for another part or tool. It is also very useful during major events when volunteers need transport and the other cart is not available. Thanks Rick! 🚗



*During the last week of operation Disney’s Red Car Trolley began skipping some stops. This seemed like a good place to end this newsletter (see story on page one).*

## DONATION REQUEST (Tax deductible receipt will be mailed to you)

*Remember the OERHS in your Will or Trust. Even a small bequest can help the museum grow!*

**Did You Know?**

Members 70.5 years or older can make tax free donations to the OERHS from their 401(k) that count towards the mandatory percentage 2.5% that they need to take out of their IRA anyway. Consider making a donation today!

### Donation Opportunities

<b>Endowment Fund</b>	<u>Items</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
	Endowment Fund	<i>Helps create an endowment fund to support operations, staff (future) and general projects</i>	\$ _____
<b>Board Fund</b>	Unrestricted Funds	<i>Allows Board to allocate funds as needed (Projects, events, car acquisition, etc.)</i>	\$ _____
<b>Capital Projects</b>	Phase 1 Yard Project	<i>Build a permanent switch yard (~11k)</i>	\$ _____
	Carbarn #2	<i>Build the 2<sup>nd</sup> carbarn (will also be the temporary restoration shop) – (~\$450k)</i>	\$ _____
	Mainline Loop	<i>Complete the loop for multiple car operation and operate single-ended cars. Adding ~ 2000 additional feet will complete the loop. (~\$45k)</i>	\$ _____
	Interpretive Center	<i>Flooring, archives, displays, and exterior landscaping (sidewalks, platforms, etc.)</i>	\$ _____
	Buy A Tie	<i>\$55 buys us a new fir tie to replace worn out ones (we need about 2000 of them so every single tie is a great help)</i>	\$ _____
<b>Restoration Projects</b>	Buy Concrete	<i>~\$120/yd<sup>3</sup> for track, curbs, platforms, etc.</i>	\$ _____
	PRL&P #1067	<i>Help refurbish the running gear we obtained from the NWRM to restore this car</i>	\$ _____
	Car Restoration	<i>All our cars need love &amp; care, and many are awaiting restoration. Donate to the car fund or specify a car. Some of the projects underway are: 813 (Broadway car), 1159 (PCC), 1455 (snow sweeper) &amp; locos 254 &amp; 401</i>	\$ _____ Car: _____
<b>Specific Items:</b> <i>(Donate items or \$)</i>	Uniform Parts	<i>Hats, pants, vests &amp; jackets for volunteers</i>	\$ _____
<b>Name Your Project</b>		<i>Do you have an idea you would like to see done? Tell us about it!</i>	\$ _____
<b>TOTAL</b>			\$ _____

**To: OERHS, 3995 Brooklake Rd, Brooks, Oregon 97303**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Cash \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Check \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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**THANK YOU!**