

FORT SMITH

TROLLEY MUSEUM

TROLLEY REPORT

December 2011

Number 104



Polar Express Family Time

Since 1985, Chris Van Allsburg's classic Christmas story, **The Polar Express**, has been enchanting children around the world. In 2004, it was made into a popular movie starring Tom Hanks. In 2011, it will bring children and families to the Fort Smith Trolley Museum for **Polar Express Family Time**, an event organizers hope to make an annual Fort Smith tradition.

The Polar Express event will be held from 6-9 p.m. Friday Dec. 16 and 2-6 p.m. Saturday Dec. 17. Volunteers from the community will take turns reading the Polar Express story to children and families in the Dining Car. Santa Claus will be on hand to visit with the children and photographer Joel Culberson has volunteered to take photos of the event and of the kids with Santa. Photos will be posted on the Fort Smith Trolley Museum's Facebook page and free prints of the photos will be available at Bedfords. David Kerr is serving as Conductor and free trolley rides will be available both Friday night and Saturday afternoon. Children will receive silver jingle bells, as they do in the Polar Express story, and volunteers are providing dozens of cookies, snacks and hot cocoa for refreshments.

The entire event is free and open to all the children and families in the area. Children are encouraged (though not required) to wear their pajamas to the event at the Trolley Museum, as the children on the train in the story do.

The idea for the event started, of all places, on Facebook in a group called Positive People of Fort Smith. Fort Smith resident Melissa Woodall had started a Trolley Museum Volunteer Week for the group in September. She and friend Chris Leimberg bounced the idea for a holiday event to bring children out to the Museum, share the Polar Express story with them, and help them create lasting, positive memories about the Trolley Museum and the trains and trolleys it features. Volunteers from the group started coming forward and asking for ways to be involved.

In her initial post to the Positive People of Fort Smith group, Woodall wrote, "The event would be great for the Trolley Museum on an ongoing basis, too. The things we try the hardest to keep are the things we feel the most connected with and have the strongest memories with. If we start a generation of little kids all having a strong happy memory of Christmas at the Trolley Museum, we'll have a generation of adults that have a strong attachment to it eventually, too."

Lighting the Engine

Christmas time is here again. A chill is in the air and a bright light is shining at the Fort Smith Trolley Museum. The Frisco 4003 steam engine is once again illuminated with over 6000 white miniature lights. New effects have been added this year with red lights on the fire box that glow as if the fires still burn in the engine. Installation of the lights takes about 48 hours of dedicated work by museum volunteers.

Time has taken its toll on the lights used to decorate the engine. After 11 years, three of 12 original strands of heavy grade commercial net lights still work. New lights are purchased each year to replace those no longer working or to add to the display. Unfortunately, most lights available at local stores are not commercial quality and many do not last more than a few years.

The museum would like to raise \$1000.00 to purchase commercial grade net lights and straight strand lights to keep the engine lit during the holidays. A minimum of \$250.00 is currently spent each year for new lights and purchasing matching commercial lights will reduce yearly costs.

If you would like to donate to this effort, please mark your donations for "Christmas Lights."

Looking Back

by Becky Meyers

“Two masked bandits took an estimated \$600 from checker C.J. Jordan at the carbarn on December 1, 1923. Arriving at the carbarn on conclusion of operations shortly after midnight, each motorman dumped contents of his farebox into a sack, placing it on a rack in Jordan’s office. Jordan, proceeding with sorting and counting the day’s receipts, failed to note activities in a hallway leading to his room. A number of Carmen observed two masked men calmly enter the carbarn. Motorman E.S. Parker assumed the two masked men might be some sort of joke until one of them fired a pistol into the air. While one bandit covered Jordan and the carmen, the other one picked up the loaded rack filled with money bags. Both proceeded to a large black touring car, where an accomplice waited with the motor running. The three bandits sped eastward on Kelley Highway toward Waldron Road.

“Light & Traction employee Charles McClure slipped out of the carbarn when he saw the masked bandits arrive, and telephoned police from the fire station across the street. Night police captain Wells and officer Taylor responded, and with Jordan they hurried eastward from the barns, out Kelley Highway, but found no trace of the bandits.”

Streetcar transportation in Fort Smith covered the years 1890-1930. Charles Winters, the original writer from where the “Looking Back” information was obtained, researched the Fort Smith *Southwest American* from its beginning in 1907, through its sale in 1923 to obtain most of the information. The information in the above article was dated December 1923, coinciding with the end of Charles Winters research of incidents published in the Fort Smith *Southwest American*.

I hope you have enjoyed reading about the Fort Smith Streetcar and some of the many adventures that happened while it was on the tracks.

Charles Winters Library Progress

The best news about the library is the completion of two ADA approved bathrooms. There is still a lot to do on the building, and we are fortunate to have our volunteers and court ordered community service workers supplying most of the labor. Thanks to Bruce Rogers Company for donating part of the fixtures and discounting the rest. Thanks to Meek Manufacturing for donating the grab bars and mirrors for the bathrooms.

Charles Winters donated the station clock from the Fort Smith and Western Station in Guthrie, Oklahoma about 20 years ago. At a time of their bankruptcy during the depression, the attorney wound up with the clock and Charles Winters purchased it from him. It was displayed in the carbarn since the donation. Harris Crane restored the clock mechanism and the clock is now in the reading room of the library ticking away like new.

20th Century Electric Railway Foundation \$6,000 Matching Grant

The Trolley Museum has a chance to receive a \$6,000 matching grant from the 20th Century Electric Railway Foundation of La Canada, California. The museum must raise \$6,000 in designated contributions to receive the grant. To date, approximately half the funds have been donated. Donations must be designated specifically to this grant to receive the matching funds.

Funds from the grant will be used to replace worn ties in the cemetery track and the switches in the carbarn tracks. The track beside the cemetery was donated to the museum by the Union Pacific Railroad about 20 years ago. The track originally led into the Colonial Bakery and was unused for about 20 years. We replaced some ties when we started using it, but most are now over 45 years old and in serious need of replacement. The switches were donated by the UPRR in 1988 and had previously been used for many

years in the yard behind Riverside Furniture.

A matching grant means that every \$1 donation you designate to the grant fund will provide a \$2 benefit. If you would like to participate in this fantastic opportunity, send your donation to the museum designated for the matching grant fund.

Two Tax Saving Opportunities

First: If you are 70 1/2 or older you can contribute a total of \$100,000 in IRA assets to one or more qualified charities. The payout can satisfy the required minimal distribution. The donor gets no deduction, but neither does he or she have to report the payouts as income. This must be done during 2011. An important detail to be aware of is that the gift must pass directly from the IRA sponsor to the charity, which sends a letter confirming the gift.

Second: A gift of appreciated assets can qualify for a deduction at full market value, allowing the donor to skip paying capital gains on all growth.

As always, consult with your tax adviser before making charitable contributions.

Search Online and Support the Trolley Museum

Join GoodSearch.com for an easy way to raise funds for the Fort Smith Trolley Museum. GoodSearch.com makes a small cash donation every time you use their free services.

They donate a penny when you search the internet. Use their GoodShop when you shop online and they donate a percentage of every purchase. They have over 100,000 coupons to help you save money, too!

Download the custom Trolley Museum Tool Bar to use as a portal when shopping on the internet.

It’s easy, it’s free, and it turns everyday activities into financial support for the Fort Smith Trolley. Go to www.goodsearch.com to get started.

Support Your Trolley Museum

Your continuing support of the *Fort Smith Trolley Museum* is appreciated. Your tax deductible contribution insures the continued operation and development of the museum.

MEMBERSHIP CARD SERVES AS AN ANNUAL PASS

___ Individual	\$10.00	___ Sustainer	\$100
___ Family	\$15.00	___ 224 Club	\$224 (Receive Plaque & Lifetime Pass)
___ Sponsor	\$25.00	___ Benefactor	\$500 (receive 224 plaque & Lifetime pass)
___ Conductor	\$50.00	___ Life	\$1,000 (Receive Certificate and Lifetime Pass)

Special Gifts

General Fund	\$ _____	Restoration fund	\$ _____
Endowment Fund	\$ _____	Special _____	\$ _____
20th Century Matching Grant	\$ _____		

Memorials and Honorariums

In ___ Memory ___ Honor of _____

Please Notify _____

Address _____

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Mail Your Tax Deductible donation to:

The museum is a 501c(3) Non- profit organization.

Fort Smith Trolley Museum

100 South 4th Street

Fort Smith, Arkansas 72901 104

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Memorials & Honorariums

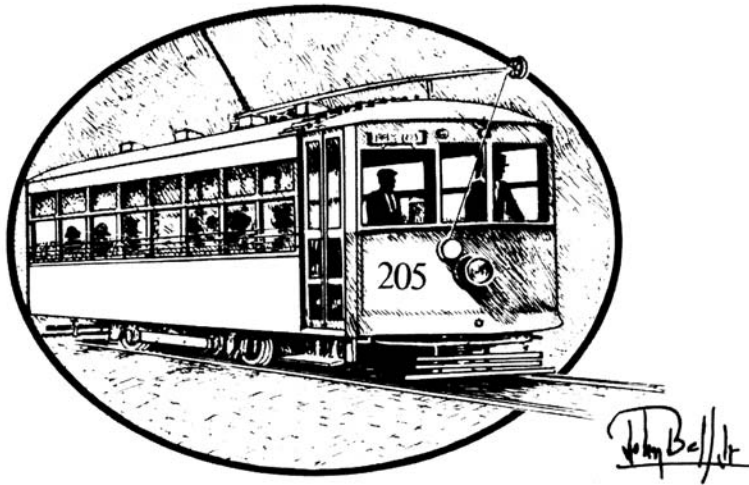
In memory of Bill White
 by Phil & Kim White
In memory of Dorene Sively
 by Mary McDonald
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In memory of Frisco the Trolley Cat
 by Bradley & Janice Martin
 by John & Juanita Brown
 by David H. Kerr
 by Loyde & Joyce Hardin
 by Marie Haurert
 by Ronald & Brenda McClelland
In honor of Art Martin
 by Maggie Malloy
 by Robert & Nadine Miller

FORT SMITH TROLLEY MUSEUM

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Polar Express Family Time
Friday, Dec. 16th and Saturday, Dec. 17th

*Please drop in for some birthday cake as we celebrate
Art Martin's 94th birthday
On Sunday, December 11, 2011
At the Fort Smith Trolley Museum Library
100 South 4th street
From 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.
No gifts please*

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Visit our website at
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for current news or to view past
newsletters.

E-mail us at info@fstm.org.

Become a fan of the Trolley
Museum. Find us on facebook at
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Join our Yahoo group at

<http://groups.yahoo.com>. Just
search for fortsmithtrolley and follow
the directions to join in on the
discussion of equipment, current
events, and work at the museum.

Reminder

The date on your mailing label is
the date of your last monetary
contribution to the Trolley Museum
and serves to keep your membership up
to date. A current membership card is
your pass to ride.

Trolley Report

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Trolley Museum

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Promoting The Railway Museum Movement!