

# Yakima Valley Trolleys YVT BULLETIN

Summer-Fall 2009

## More Than Half Our Riders Come From Outside of Yakima

Figures from our Guest Book for the summer of 2009 are in and once again more than half of our riders come from places outside of Yakima. Every year since we began keeping records, approximately 51% of our riders are non-Yakimans. For 2009, 49.8% came from Yakima and 50.2% from elsewhere. In 2008 the numbers were 49.2% Yakima and 50.8% out of town. It must be noted that not everyone who rides signs the Guest Book, but Liz Brown and Charlie Cripps have tried very hard this year to not let any names and addresses slip by unrecorded.

We had 255 more riders this season than in

2008. With the Santa trolley riders added to the summer riders, we had a total in 2008 of around 1000 riders. This year with the additional summer riders and also the addition of a Halloween trolley, the total for the year is expected to be considerably higher.

Fifteen of our riders this past summer were from out of the country. They came from Canada, Germany, Uganda, Afghanistan, Mexico, and Bangladesh. Approximately 13% of our riders were from other states and about 36% were from elsewhere in Washington State. Yakima officials take note: Yakima Trolleys are bringing in tourist dollars!!

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## Trolley News and Events

Scott Neel is working diligently on getting the necessary permissions from Pacific Power & Light to put our wires back up on some of their poles. PP&L's codes and standards have been the major hurdle for us to overcome in restoring the wire to Selah. PP&L was apparently unaware that there are specific codes for trolley railroads. Scott tirelessly researched the codes and found the ones relating to trolley railroads and, with help from Yakima's City Attorney, presented that information to PP&L. Hopefully this will unclog the logjam we have been in and get the project moving.



**To celebrate the end of the season a picnic was held at Lyons Park. Here Scott neel and his family with other passengers head to the park**

**Charlie Cripps** and **Liz Brown** have been the face of Yakima Valley Trolleys. Almost every single weekend this summer they have come to Yakima from their home on the west side of the mountains and manned the gift shop. Liz sold tickets and managed the gift shop while Charlie became a qualified motorman and filled in when other motormen weren't available, as well as doing many odd jobs around the trolley barn and powerhouse.

**Ken Johnsen** got two display cases rebuilt and ready for museum displays, with the help of Charlie Cripps and Ed Neel. Ken is working on assembling the artifacts we have for display into a meaningful telling of the YVT story. Ken is also developing the powerhouse office into an interactive display where visitors will get to "talk" with YVT's first General Manager, Nick Richards in 1911! Stay tuned...

**Ed Neel** does more behind-the-scenes work for the trolleys than any ten average people. He is one of our best liaisons with Bill Cook and the City of Yakima and he has established good relationships with the City Shops people. Thanks to Ed's efforts, the City has agreed to include our YVT trucks in their maintenance cycle and take care of the trucks' maintenance needs. Ed has developed good working relationships with other City officials and also has gotten us a secure, unidentified place to store the Line Car and 298 when the City does repair work on the trolley barn.

I like to call **Yvonne Wilbur** the "Cheerleader" for the trolleys. Yvonne works hard to get us the publicity we need, not only for our regular running, but for our events. She got us the Donald Mansion for a Spring program to attract volunteers and she makes



Motormen from the 2009 season pose next to trolley #1776 at Lyons Park. Left to Right are Ed Neel, Scott Neel, Paul Edmondson, Larry Perrigo, Charlie Cripps, Gregory Johnsen and Ken Johnsen.

sure the newspapers carry announcements of our events, as well as ongoing listings in their calendars for our days and times of operation.

**Gregory Johnsen** has completely revamped our website into a state of the art site, as well as maintaining the trolleys' presence on Facebook and Twitter. (Yes, the trolleys tweet!) Check out the website if you haven't seen it lately. Gregory also has been developing relationships with important people in the trolley world, most recently with Eric Sitiko, manager of Portland Streetcar's maintenance operations. Eric is on both the Board of the Association of Railway Museums and the Streetcar Committee of the American Public Transit Association. He is our newest member and is eager to lend us his expertise.

**Crystal Knoblauch** and **Susan Paoella** were period actors on the trolleys this summer. Both were highly acclaimed by passengers who said their presence added a lot to the ride experience. More actors are needed, so if this sort of thing interests you, please let us know.

**Ray Paoella** was Yakima's City Attorney for many years and has long been a good friend of the trolleys. As City Attorney, he would have had a conflict of interest to be involved with the trolley organization, but he has taken a new job with the County, and has now agreed to work with the trolleys. He was elected unanimously to a position on the YVT Board in July.

Many friends of the trolleys have made financial contributions to YVT this year. Some have been anonymous and others have come from members and supporters including: Ralph Samuelson, Bob Sullivan, Ryan Cooper, David Klingele, Ken Johnsen, Charlie Cripps, Fred Spurrell, Hilding Larson, Paul Edmondson, Mike Collins, Andy Gautrey and Dan Tamsky. If I have left anyone out,

please let me know as I am very eager to give everyone credit who helps!

In other news, the City has placed a moratorium on carbarn tours while repairs are made to the walls and supports of the overhead crane. The contract for that work is being let and hopefully it will be completed over the winter break.

New member **Jerry Geiseke** owns land at Taylor (north of Selah) on which the YVT's Speyers extension was located. Jerry's land is just west of where the McKee waiting station originally stood. Jerry is a historian and prior to doing some excavation that obliterated the YVT right of way, he let several of us come and photograph the YVT grade and run metal detectors over it. The only YVT artifacts found were some guy wire anchors for the poles that went around a curve.

At the urging of the BNSF Railway, the City of Yakima erected a chain link fence in the vicinity of the Greenway at the Naches River. BNSF is concerned about people walking over its bridge. Unfortunately the fence was placed alongside and over the YVT right of way leading up to our bridge and actually funnels people onto the BNSF bridge. We are negotiating with the City to get the fence relocated to a more useful position alongside the Greenway where it will not spoil the view of our line and will actually keep people off the two railroads.

An end of the season picnic for trolley volunteers, members and their families was held on Saturday, September 19th. The group boarded the trolley #1776 at the carbarn and rode to Lyons Park where picnic tables were gathered together for a potluck picnic dinner. Motormen wore their uniforms and were posed in a group photo beside the trolley. Good food, good people and good weather combined to make it a fun event.

The Board decided, at the urging of Liz Brown, to try running a Halloween Trolley this year. It will be held from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm on Saturday, October 31st. The first 100 kids to ride will get a free pumpkin. Members Joe Rief of Albertson's and Bob Brown of Wray's Markets have agreed to help get us the pumpkins needed. Yvonne Wilbur is getting the event listed in the papers and is helping with the crafts for kids to do while waiting to ride the trolley. Liz is going to be a witch. Ken Johnsen is providing candy and Crystal Knoblauch and her daughters will distribute it to the children.

We are advertising it as a family friendly event so that those who don't want to take children to super scary haunted houses have a place to take their kids. We will need motormen and helpers at the powerhouse, so please mark the date on your calendar and consider helping.

The Santa Trolley will be run on Saturday, December 12th this year from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm. Mark your calendars!

Ken Johnsen, President, Yakima Valley Trolleys

**HALLOWEEN TROLLEY**

Saturday, October 31, 2009  
11:00AM - 4:00 PM

- \* Free pumpkins for first 100 kids who ride
- \* Fun and treats for all
- \* Tickets \$3 per person
- \* Rides leave trolley barn at S 3rd Ave & Pine Street
- \* More info: [www.yakimavalleytrolleys.org](http://www.yakimavalleytrolleys.org)

# YVT's Bridge Over the Naches River

This summer, through a grant obtained by the City of Yakima, YVT's bridge over the Naches River was soda blasted and painted with both a rust preventive agent and black paint. It looks like new. The paint crew had to put up a large tent over the entire structure so that paint as well as blasted materials would not fall into the river. (Imagine YVT doing that back in the days of Jack Splawn!) Each span was done separately.

Considering it is 114 years old, the bridge is in remarkably good condition. It was originally constructed to carry the Union Pacific's tracks over the Blue River near Manhattan, Kansas in 1895. It was designed by a famous Union Pacific structural engineer named George H. Pegram. He created its unusual and unique truss arrangement in which each truss is at a sloping angle toward the center, and no two trusses are parallel. A number of bridges of this design were built on the Union Pacific system and they have become known as Pegram Truss bridges. Very few of them remain today and they are highly sought out by bridge enthusiasts.

When Union Pacific's traffic over the Blue River grew, a larger bridge was needed and the Pegram Truss bridge was dismantled, piece by piece, and stored as a "kit". Every bar, bolt and nut had a number so that it could be reassembled in a different location.

In 1912 the YVT was extending its line to Selah and it needed a suitable bridge to span the Naches River. Through communications with Union Pacific's Stores

Department, YVT learned of the availability of the Blue River kit bridge and had it shipped in gondolas to Yakima. Abutments and a pier were built in the Naches River, and the bridge was erected to start a new career on the YVT. It has remained unchanged for the last 97 years and, hopefully, with the new anti-rust treatment, will remain serviceable for many more years to come.

Thanks go to Lauri Johnsen for discovering and researching the bridge's early history.



From an earlier time, three kids ham it up at the No Trespassing sign at the Naches River Bridge. Richard Wilkens Collection.





**Top photo: After being retired from service streetcars #6 & #7 became some low rent housing. Lower photo: YVT's first bus was the B-1 and was built by Mack in November 1925 and entered service in January 1926. Here we see it on a cold and snowy December day in 1948 next to motor #299 at the sub station. The B-1 was retired in 1948. Bruce Holcomb photographs, Collection of Richard Wilkens.**

# Yakima Valley Trolleys - Membership Application

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_  New Member  Renewal

## Please list those areas you have experience in or would like to help with:

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trolley restoration / maintenance | <input type="checkbox"/> Board of Directors / officers | <input type="checkbox"/> Website and e-mail        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trolley operation                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Liaison with City of Yakima   | <input type="checkbox"/> Publications / newsletter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Track maintenance                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Museum development            | <input type="checkbox"/> Audio / video productions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Overhead wire maintenance         | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Relations              | <input type="checkbox"/> Archives / library        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ticket selling / gift shop        | <input type="checkbox"/> Finances and bookkeeping      | <input type="checkbox"/> Fund raising              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                       |  |  |

## DUES AND DONATIONS

Dues are \$25.00 per calendar year. Donations are gladly accepted to help with necessary repairs and projects of the YVT. YVT is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. All donations are tax deductible.

Enclosed is \$25.00 for my membership. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my donation in the amount of: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

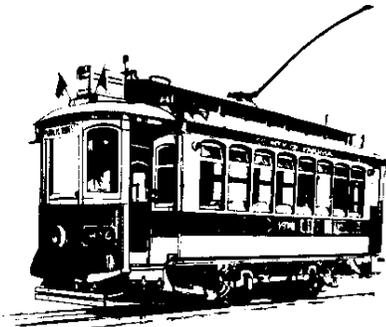
Mail application and dues, payable to Yakima Valley Trolleys, to:  
Ken Johnsen, Membership Secretary, P.O. Box 161, Renton, WA 98057-0161

## YVT Bulletin

Yakima Valley Trolleys  
P.O. Box 796  
Yakima, WA 98907-0796



# Beginning the Next 100 Years !



## FIRST CLASS