

**The South Carolina Railroad Museum Newsletter**  
*Information and Happenings on the Rockton, Rion & Western Railroad*  
Volume 41 Number 1 Winter 2013

***Nothing Could be Finer Than DINNER ON THE DINER***



The Valentine Sweetheart Dinner Train entertains passengers at twilight in Rion. Photo by Jim Owens.

**IN THE NEWS:**

We hope you are having a great winter and are looking forward to the spring weather. We finished 2012 with increased ridership from operations and charters. The sold-out Sweetheart Dinner Trains were a success. A Polishing Party for No. 1249 was held in February with amazing results. Clark Gregory needs help with train show displays. The Pickens Railroad is facing abandonment. USC Professor Rudy Mancke will host two nature excursions in April.

**HOT TOPIC:** WE NEED YOU for the Eggspress Trains on March 23<sup>rd</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>. Contact Rodger Stroup or Tim Hill to help.

**MEMBERSHIP:**

The next SCRM Membership Meeting will be at the Rion building at 10 AM on March 9th. Family Membership is \$35; Single is \$25; and Senior is \$18. See our website, get an application in Rockton or mail it to us. Members ride free on all *regular* trains.

**CONTACT:**

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**Vince LiBrizzi, Editor** <>

**Dinner Train is a Sold-Out Success**

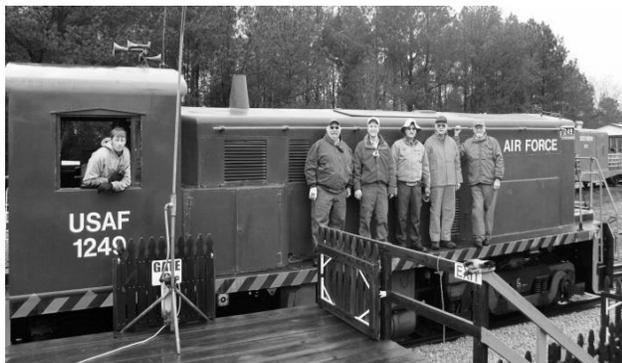
***By Vince LiBrizzi***

On February 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, Valentine Sweetheart Dinner trains operated on the Rockton, Rion & Western to a sellout crowd and glowing reviews. Passengers were treated to a deluxe three-course meal of Prime Rib, Shrimp and Grits, or Chicken entrees. Guests enjoyed winter twilight views along the railroad from the windows of the *Lake Rion* dining car. The dinner trains left at 5:30 PM and paused briefly at Rion, returning to Rockton by 9 PM. A romantic and enjoyable time was had by all aboard. Many thanks to the crew and all involved for their hard work and dedication to this successful event. <>

## Polishing Party for No. 1249 is a Success in Spite of the Weather

*By Vince LiBrizzi*

On Saturday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>, I organized the first-ever Polishing Party for Diesel Locomotive No. 1249 to restore her heavily oxidized paint finish. Unfortunately, the weather in Rockton that day was a rainy and cold 48 degrees! Undaunted by the elements, the seven of us donned our raingear and washed, compounded, polished, and waxed the entire locomotive in less than five hours. The results are astonishing as seen in the pictures below. No. 1249 is now resplendent in the bright blue Air Force paint scheme she was painted in the early 1990s. Many thanks to David Klaver, Rufus Timms, Jim Owens, Chris Rambo, Norm Bremer, and Rodger Stroup for their dedication and hard work on this project. We have two more locomotives that also need a Polishing Party, lest they become jealous of their fortunate sister. Next time, I will pick a warm and sunny day! <>



The Polishing Party crew poses with Shiny No. 1249.



No. 1249's restored paint compared to sister No. 1276.

## Want FREE Publicity for the Museum? How about a Train Show!

*By Clark Gregory*

We have a golden opportunity that needs only brochures and your participation to increase awareness of the museum. Members have attended train shows for years talking about the museum and distributing literature. It began when the Great American Train Show came to Columbia years ago. The museum participated and provided two displays, an HO layout and historic artifacts. The layout won a \$100 first place prize. That effort was repeated in Charlotte and other locations. In 2011, we attended ten events, exposing the SCRM to over 35,000 people. The display consists of a flashing rear end device (FRED) as an eye catcher, an M19 motorcar, pictures, and a slide show. Children love to get a picture in the M19 and printed on paper with museum information.

We need your help as we can't continue this activity alone. In addition, participants get early free admission to the shows. Sorry, we are not responsible for your model train purchases! It's an opportunity to talk to train enthusiasts and relatives of young railfans to spread the word about the SCRM.

We will be in Charlotte in June, Chapin in September, Charleston in mid-November, and Columbia in November and December. We need 3 or 4 people to help at upcoming shows. Call Clark Gregory at **803-781-7912** for more information. <>



Attendees visit the museum display at a train show.

## **Eggspres Trains Will Have New Events**

*By Tim Hill and Vince LiBrizzi*

The Eggspres trains operating on Saturday, March 23<sup>rd</sup> and Saturday, March 30<sup>th</sup> will be very different than any previous Easter Bunny trains operated at the museum. The departure times will be at 9:30 AM, 10:30 AM, 11:30 AM, 1:30 PM and 2:30 PM. In order to accommodate this schedule, for the first time ever, we will be running two separate trains to Greenbrier. Trains will unload passengers on the gravel crossing and then meet and pass in the siding to provide hourly service.

All passengers will be invited to detrain and attend many Easter and spring-themed events. Planned activities include a meet and photo opportunity with the Easter Bunny, an Easter egg candy treat, face painting, temporary tattoos and coloring books for all the children. Refreshments such as drinks, popcorn, and cotton candy are also planned.

We will need many people to help out with this event, not only in operating the two trains, but in assisting with all the activities at Greenbrier. Please plan on being available to help with the Eggspres trains. Contact Rodger Stroup or Tim Hill for more information. <>



No. 2 hauling freight on the Pickens Railroad in 1982.

## **Pickens Railroad to be Abandoned**

*By Jim Owens*

This year, the original Pickens Railroad is slated to be abandoned. The 8.9 mile line from Pickens to Easley, South Carolina will likely become a rails-to-trails path. The railroad has been nearly abandoned at least twice before. With no freight customers left, abandonment seems certain this time. The Pickens began operations in 1898, and derailed on the very first run. Financially, the company limped along under various owners until 1973. That year, the National Railway Utilization Company (NRUC) bought the railroad and the car shop in Pickens. NRUC put a lot of money into the railroad and built many boxcars at the car shop. Those boxcars were lucrative business for the NRUC as they traveled the national rail network. In 1980, deregulation occurred, marking the end of the box-car boom and a slow decline for the Pickens. Industries left the railroad resulting in the car shop in Pickens as the sole customer. The shop and the railroad were sold to the Chattahoochee Locomotive Company, (CLCX) from Clarksville, GA in the early 1990s. CLCX brought big changes to the railroad company with the construction of tracks around Anderson to serve a new paper mill, bringing in much new traffic to the area. The CLCX locomotive company is also moving to Anderson to eliminate maintaining 8.9 miles of railroad, of which they are the sole customer. The Pickens *Railway* Company, the new company under CLCX ownership, is now a solvent shortline operating around Anderson. Soon there will be a hiking trail on a historic railroad roadbed in Pickens County. The last Pickens locomotive, No. 2, the *T. Grady Welborn*, is on permanent display in Pickens. No.2 is a 1945 Baldwin VO-660 diesel which was last in service about 13 years ago. Judging from the picture, it looks like old No.2 could use a Polishing Party, too! <>

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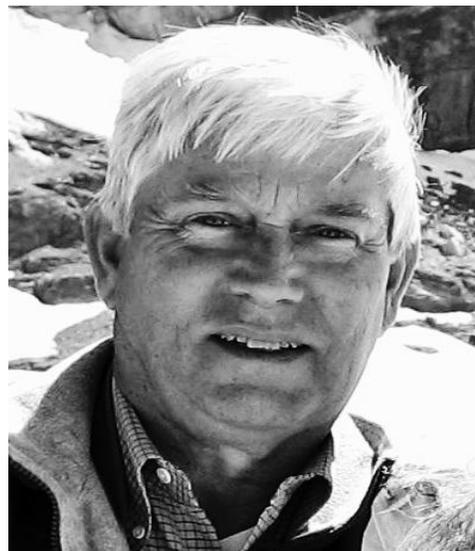
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**Rudy Mancke to Host Excursions**

**By Rodger Stroup**

In April, noted USC professor Rudy Mancke of ETV's long running *Nature Scene* program will be hosting two excursions on the Rockton, Rion, & Western. Rudy will be riding the rails and pointing out the natural features along the right of way. Weather permitting, we will use the new open air car *Green Giant* on the trips so passengers can get the best views of the wildlife from the train. The trips are on Saturday, April 6<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 AM and 1:30 PM. Contact Rodger if you would like to help with these excursions, which promise to be very popular and completely sold out. <>



Professor Rudy Mancke of ETV's *Nature Scene*