

The Rockton-Rion Flyer

News and Information from the South Carolina Railroad Museum
Volume 43 Number 3 Fall 2015

BBQ TRAINS SELL OUT!



RS4-TC-1A diesel No. 1276 leads a BBQ train out of Rockton station on a sunny Saturday early evening.

FLYER NEWS FLASH:

2015 is turning out to be a very successful year for the museum. All of the BBQ dinner trains were sold out and enjoyed clement weather. Pumpkin Patch trains are scheduled for October 17th and 24th and should be very popular. Several maintenance projects have been very well attended and addressed. The updated by-laws were approved at the last Membership meeting. The Gallery exhibits a fine collection of rare railroad china.

UPCOMING EVENTS: Saturday excursions are now running. Help is needed to staff the train and the gift shop and ticket office. Contact David or Rodger to participate.

HOT TOPIC: Pumpkin Patch trains will run October 17th and 24th at 10:30 AM, 11:30 AM, 1:30 PM, and 2:30 PM. Contact Kelvin or Rodger to help out. **WE NEED YOU!**

MEMBERSHIP MEETING: Saturday, November 14, 2015 at 10 A.M. in the Rion office building. Nominations for Board members will be accepted. All members are encouraged to attend.

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS:

Please send articles and pictures to:
SCRM, P.O. Box 7246, Columbia, SC 29202
email: libreez@carolina.rr.com.

Vince LiBrizzi, Editor

Maintenance Update

By Charles Weber

Our maintenance crew has continued to work on several tasks for the rest of 2015. These include finishing the new storage siding in Rion, putting the Rion north main back in service, repairing the ballast regulator, and repairing RS4-TC1A No. 1275's fuel sight glass to return her to service after years of inactivity. On a recent work session, the air compressor's fuel pump issues were addressed. We also inventoried the brake hoses and checked the antifreeze levels in the maintenance of way equipment to prepare them for the cold temperatures ahead this winter.

We have work sessions nearly every Saturday targeting specific projects on the railroad. If you're not on the email list that is sent out weekly recapping our progress and describing our future sessions, please contact Charles. Many people have contributed countless hours to these tasks. Thanks all the hard working members for their continuing efforts. A railroad is only as good as its physical right-of-way condition and equipment, so we really need your help to keep the trains running safely and smoothly. Come on out for a work session next time and get some iron in your diet and improve the RR&W! Please contact Charles Weber at cwebersr@bellsouth.net or (803) 317-7187 for more information, to get placed on the email list, or to help out with our track maintenance efforts.



A R&R 0-4-0T moves cars at Anderson Quarry in the 1950s.

Forgotten Steam on the Rockton & Rion *By Vince LiBrizzi*

The Rockton & Rion was one of the last railroads in the United States that operated steam locomotives into the 1960s.

The locomotives most associated with the R&R are medium sized Baldwin freight locomotives: 2-8-2s No. 19 and No. 31, and 2-8-0 No. 712. All three locomotives still exist, with No. 712 still on the railroad on a siding in Rion. However, there were two other unsung locomotives which worked the railroad; small 0-4-0T saddle tankers, somewhat like the Gramling Locomotive Works' No. 75. Their purpose was to switch cars and locomotives around the quarries in Anderson and Rion, and they led an uneventful and mostly undocumented life on the railroad. These hapless little shunters were in service for decades and saw many years of hard use on the railroad. Towards the end of their careers they were in such poor mechanical shape that the enginemen noted that more steam was probably leaking out of the cylinders than being used to move the locomotives (note evidence of this in the picture above). After Martin Marietta acquired the railroad, these little switchers were stored at Anderson Quarry and deteriorated further. In the early 1970s, both of these battered and worn locomotives were scrapped. It is unfortunate that neither of these little steamers were saved for posterity and restoration.



Families participate in Pumpkin Patch activities at Greenbrier.

Pumpkin Patch Trains Running, Motor Car Rides Available.

By Rodger Stroup

On October 17th and 24th, the RR&W will host two Pumpkin Patch train events. Tickets are already selling briskly, and as in previous years, two trains will operate providing hourly service. Trains are at 10:30 AM, 11:30 AM, 1:30 PM, and 2:30 PM.

Passengers will participate in many activities at Greenbrier, such as picking and decorating a pumpkin from the patch, G scale railroad featuring Thomas the Tank Engine and other trains will be in operation. In addition, brief motor car rides will also be offered during the layover in Greenbrier, an event that has proven popular with our passengers.

We expect the event to be very popular as it has in years past. More than 800 pumpkins have been ordered, and many people have pledged their support for this event. We need your help as there are many activities and functions that need staffing. Contact David or Kelvin for more information.



RS4-TC-1A diesel No. 1249 at Rockton with the BBQ Dinner Train.

BBQ Trains are Complete Sell Out
By Kelvin Woods and Vince LiBrizzi

On September 19th, the RR&W operated the last of three BBQ Dinner Trains for the 2015 season. As before, all seats were sold out more than a week before the trip. This is remarkable since the only advertising for the BBQ trains was on our Facebook page and website. Due to the extremely hot weather, the *Lake Rion* dining car was not used for the train since its air conditioning system has some difficulty handling extreme temperatures over 90 degrees. Instead, passengers were treated to some old fashioned natural breezes aboard the *Green Giant* open car on the way to Rion, where a delicious 3 course meal of pork and chicken BBQ, sides, beverages, and desert was served in the Stribling office building by Little Pigs Catering and our hard working museum staff.

The passengers were served on tables where all enjoyed the comfort of the air-conditioned room and the environment of a classic railroad building. Plans are already being discussed for additional BBQ trains next season. All involved feel that these trains are a successful and popular event for the railroad that has exceeded all expectations since its debut in 2014.

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Return Service Requested



Railroad china and silverware displayed in the Gallery.

The Railroad Dining Experience

By Gene Allen

During the Golden Age of passenger rail travel, three carriers served South Carolina: the Seaboard Air Line, Atlantic Coast Line, and Southern Railway. All offered dining service. Although diners lost money for the railroad, they were a necessary service, with carriers trying to outdo rivals by hiring noted chefs and offering unique cuisine. Each railroad had its own distinct silver and china patterns which the carriers kept for several decades. Railroad dining was a luxury which could be enjoyed by the ordinary traveler, although it was often glamorized in the media and movies. A diner had a crew of 14 to 18, and required an extensive inventory of silver and china. The exhibits at the Museum represent a sample of the designs used by the passenger lines during the pre-Amtrak era.