

# Hotbox

The NEW Generation of Railroaders

June 1998

Issue 322

## In This Issue

Meet the new editor

Haulin' Coal

The Official Publication of the Teen Association of Model Railroaders

## Staff

Editor.....Mike Riley  
Publisher.....Jeremy Conyer  
Advertising.....Peter Maurath

The Hotbox is the official publication of the Teen Association of Model Railroaders. The TAMR is a non-profit organization created to promote, stimulate, foster, and encourage young persons, the hobby of model railroading, the activity of railfanning, and the preservation of the history, science, and technology thereof. The Hotbox is issued eleven times per year, along with an annual Directory of Members.

## TAMR Membership

Membership to the TAMR includes an eleven-issue subscription to the Hotbox, the January publication of the Directory of Members, quarterly regional newsletter, and an invitation to attend and participate in all TAMR events. The available membership categories are as follows:

Regular (21 and under).....\$15.00  
Associate (over 21).....\$20.00  
Sustaining (Reg. & Assoc.).....\$20.00+

### SEND MEMBERSHIPS TO

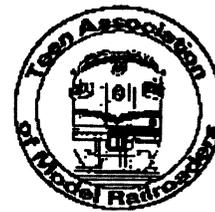
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# The TAMR Hotbox



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## In This Issue

### Haulin' Coal

Part 1: Anthracite Coal overview

PAGE 4

### Online Members

Listing of online TAMR members

PAGE 8

## Departments

### From the Editor

Page 3

### New Products

Page 3

### Train Orders

Page 7

### New Members

Page 7

**On the Cover:** A CSX hot steel slab train prepares to enter a small yard on the outskirts of Middletown, Ohio, on it's way into the AK Steel Middletown works. The train is carrying about thirty cars loaded with about seventy-five tons each of hot (not molten, but about 800 degrees) steel slabs in from Ashland, KY. The Slabs will be melted down in a Continuous Casting mill and made into steel shapes.

*Photo by Mike Riley*

## Submissions

News, feature articles, drawings, and photo submissions are welcome and should be sent to the editor. Photos must be prints, and have good contrast. Drawings should preferably be in black ink. The editor will gladly create artwork for you if desired. All submissions become the property of the TAMR unless a SASE is included for material to be returned. Please include captions with photos.

HOTBOX EDITOR

Mike Riley

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## Next Month

Tune-Up Athearn Engines

The View From the Cab

Haulin' Coal: Anthracite Part II

The Green Mountain Flyer, Recap!

## From the Editor

Mike Riley

Hello everyone, I'm back! For those of you who are new to the TAMR, let me introduce myself. First off, my name is Mike Riley, and I'm seventeen years old. I live in Miamisburg, Ohio, a suburb of Dayton. I guess, technically, this is the third position I have held on the Teen Association of Model Railroader's Board of Directors. Back when I was fourteen, I took on editorship for the first time, and that lasted for about two years. Soon after, I took over the position of Vice President, which only lasted about six months. Now I'm coming straight from that to editor of the Hotbox, again. I really enjoyed doing the Hotbox, and am glad I have it back.

I hope everyone enjoys reading the Hotbox, and I will try to make it as informative as possible. I would love some feedback from you guys and gals out there in TAMR land. Also, when the Hotbox changes hands, a major shortage of articles always turns up, so if there are any prospering authors out there, please, please send me an article. Photos are also needed, as well as drawings, cartoons, etc..

One thing I feel that the Hotbox is lacking is more model railroading-oriented content. Not that I have anything against railfanning or prototype railroads, Oh no! I just think it is time we got some model railroading action in here! In the December issue, David Hadley ran an excellent feature on Lewis Ableidinger's Dakota Railways layout. I would just love to be able to print a layout feature in each issue, but I'll need your help, afterall, this is *your* magazine. Even if it's just a short paragraph and a photo or two, I'll print it. Hopefully next month I'll be able to kick this off with a few words and photos of my own layout.

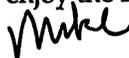
I would also like to continue the tradition of providing readers with accurate, honest product reviews, but again will need your help.

So enough about the Hotbox, for those of you who know me, I'll let you in on what I've been up to lately. I am sort-of modeling the Bessemer & Lake Erie, but more specifically, a parent holding company's own line, the Eastern Allegheny & Ontario. This is a freelanced railroad company whose mainline runs along the coast of Lake Ontario in New York to Atlantic Ocean seaports in Connecticut and Rhode Island, and down into the Anthracite coal fields of eastern Pennsylvania. My current layout measures 8'x10' and is "L" shaped. It features a Connecticut port town with alot of fishing docks, a few fishing boats, a coal pier, a granite loading pier, a railroad car ferry, and numerous other industries, as well as a number of ships and boats. The whole front edge of the layout will be water. Look for articles about anthracite railroading and waterfront railroading in upcoming issues of the Hotbox.

Besides trains, my interests include real and model cars, art, photography, rock climbing, collecting CDs, and, of course, my girlfriend Alicia (I've even been able to spark a mild interest in trains within her-- she thinks they're cute!).

So, that's me. I'm giving everyone in the TAMR an assignment. I would like everyone to write me a letter and tell me about yourself and your interests. I love hearing from people! I may even publish it!

OK, I think I've said enough. May you all enjoy the Hotboxes!



Mike

## New Products

**Atlas Model Railroad Co.** is now making GE U-23B diesel in HO scale. In N scale, Atlas has released their 14,000-gallon kaolin tank car. Atlas also introduced an N scale GP40-2 that is DCC-ready.

**Athearn Inc.** has several GP38-2 Special Edition sets available: one orange Elgin, Joilet & Eastern; one powered and one dummy Conrail in Operation Lifesaver logos; and one powered and one dummy CSX in SCL and Family Lines paint schemes. Athearn's excellent GE AMD-103 Amtrak passenger locomotive is also now on the shelf.

**Wm. K. Walthers** has announced Amtrak Superliner cars available in sleeper, lounge, coach, transition sleeper, and diner configurations, as well as an EMD F40PH, all in HO scale.

**Micro Engineering** now has N scale code-70 Flex-Trak Turnouts.

**Life-Like** has announced a new Proto-1000 series of locomotives and cars in HO scale.

**Stewart Hobbles** has announced an ALCo Century 628 with several body variations available, a 50' boxcar, and a Baldwin VO-1000 switcher.

**1997 Denver**

**Zephyr**

**convention video**

Newton Vezina

76 Roy St.

Springfield, MA 01104

(413) 739-1949

## Modelling the coal mines

About two years ago, when Brent Johnson was the editor of the Hotbox, he started a series of articles called "Haulin' Coal", which focused on methods of coal mining, various coal mines, the railroads who ran to those coal mines, and how to model those mines. For some time, "Haulin' Coal" seemed to drop off the pages of the Hotbox, but since the coal mining industry is my primary interest in the hobby, I have decided to bring it back, and hopefully provide some useful information for everyone out there.

Coal is an interesting facet of railroading. For almost the entire history of railroads in America, coal has one of the major lifebloods of the industry. And within the model railroading world, there never seems to be a shortage of layouts that feature coal mines, or hopper cars, or power plants, or coal dealers, or some other industry or item that has to deal with coal. But the odd thing is, there has never really been a whole lot of coverage in the prototype and model press about how to accurately model this highly interesting industry.

Moreover, there has been very little written about modeling the anthracite coal industry.

### What is anthracite?

Many of you by now are probably asking "what did he just say?" For starters, there are basically two types of coal: "anthracite" (known as hard coal), and "bituminous" (the soft coal). Anthracite coal is found almost exclusively in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

Coal was formed in Pennsylvania when a series of coastal swamps were created as rising ocean water flooded heavily vegetated land areas. Later, the sea receded and the swamps were covered by layers of mud, sand, and skeletal matter from ocean organisms. This happened many times, eventually forming layers of coal

interspersed between bands of rock, limestone, and shale. Later periods of intense geological activity caused upheavals of the earth's crust, resulting in ridges and mountains across the state. The mountain-building forces in the western and central parts of the state were less intense, resulting in gradual hills and valleys in the originally horizontal land surface and coal seams.

The eastern part of Pennsylvania was subjected to much more intense pressures, which led to folding, cracking, and upheaving the deposited layers of coal and other minerals. In some places, the veins of coal intersected the surface at an angle, then, plunging steeply into the basin, they would come to the surface at the other edge of the valley or basin. The additional geological activity subjected the coal to higher pressures, and possible more heat, which made the coal denser and less gaseous.

The coal which received the higher pressures is called anthracite coal, and all other types of coal are forms of bituminous coal.

For many years, anthracite coal was a major energy source in the northeastern United States. It was used primarily for heating homes and other buildings, but a large quantity was used in power plants for generating electricity.

The transportation of anthracite was the reason for constructing the railroads which ultimately were joined to form the Reading, Lackawanna, Delaware & Hudson, Lehigh Valley and others which served northeastern Pennsylvania.

Hauling anthracite was still an important part of railroad traffic until well into the early diesel era. A considerable number of mines and processing facilities were in operation as late as 1965. And today, Conrail lists almost twenty-five points where anthracite is loaded. While much of this coal is used in power plants, large amounts are also used for chemical processes and as a filter material.

Bituminous coal is well suited to being

made into coke. Coke is almost a pure-carbon product used in the steel making industry. Coke is made by baking coal at several thousand degrees in a sealed chamber for about a day, driving off gasses and other volatile materials and leaving carbon. The gasses are also reclaimed, processed, and used in other types of industrial situations. However, anthracite coal is not suitable for coke for several reasons. First, it is already almost pure carbon, but in a very dense form, which would be hard to convert into coke anyway. It is more expensive, and slightly rarer than bituminous which also contributes to its uselessness as coke. While bituminous coal burns well, it does not burn cleanly. It is inexpensive and is thus suited for use in power plants, and as fuel for railroad steam locomotives. Anthracite was used as a locomotive fuel for many years, but it became much cheaper to have bituminous coal shipped in. Anthracite coal burns incredibly cleanly producing very little smoke, ash or smell, which makes it ideal for home heating.

#### Those great big buildings

The coal mines modeled on typical model railroads represent soft coal tipples. Really, we don't model the actual mine, as the mines are under the surface of the earth, unless it is an open pit or strip mine. What is modeled is either a loading facility or a preparation plant. The soft coal tipple is literally that. Since bituminous coal occurs in thick seams with little rock or shale mixed in, only the coal is removed. It is brought out and, after very basic screening and hand picking to remove any stray rock and other foreign material, it is dumped directly into the hopper cars. These kinds of operations are still common in the soft coal areas, but the output of the mines is usually forwarded to a large processing plant where it is carefully graded, cleaned, and sized for today's complex coal market.

From the very start of the anthracite coal mining industry, it was necessary to resort to extensive crushing, screening, and separation of the accompanying rock and slate that was removed from the mine along with the coal. The market for anthracite always demanded that it be sized for the

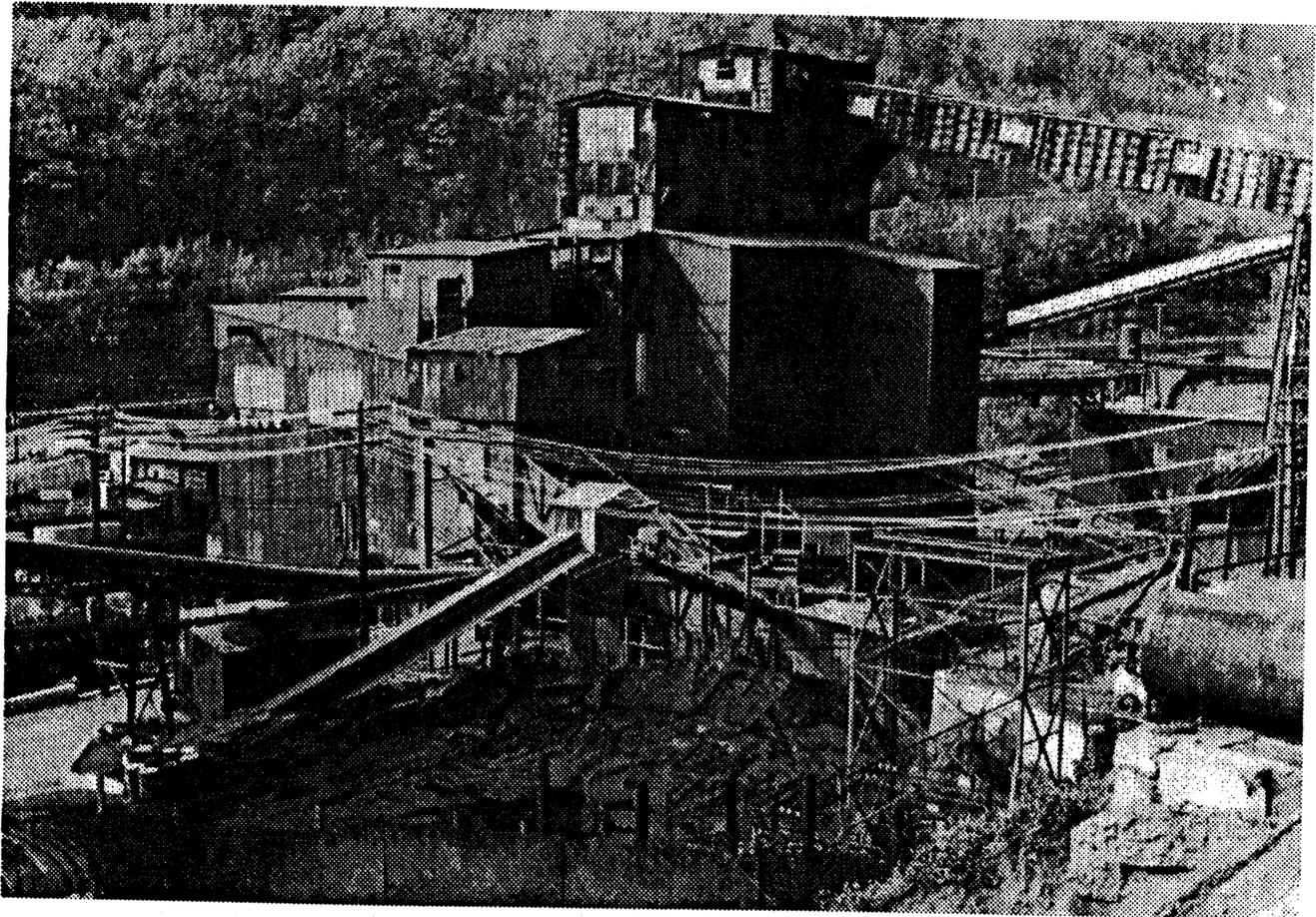
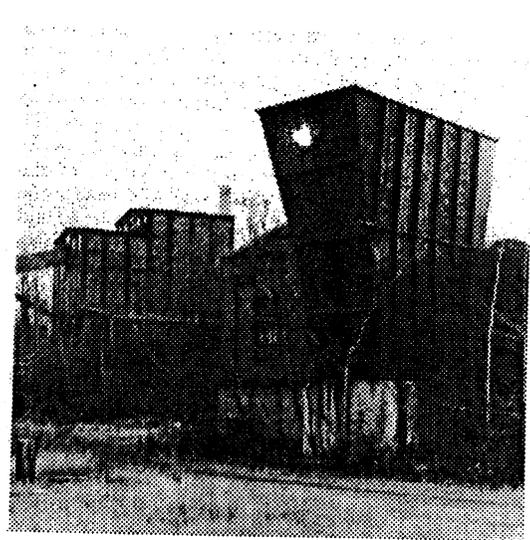
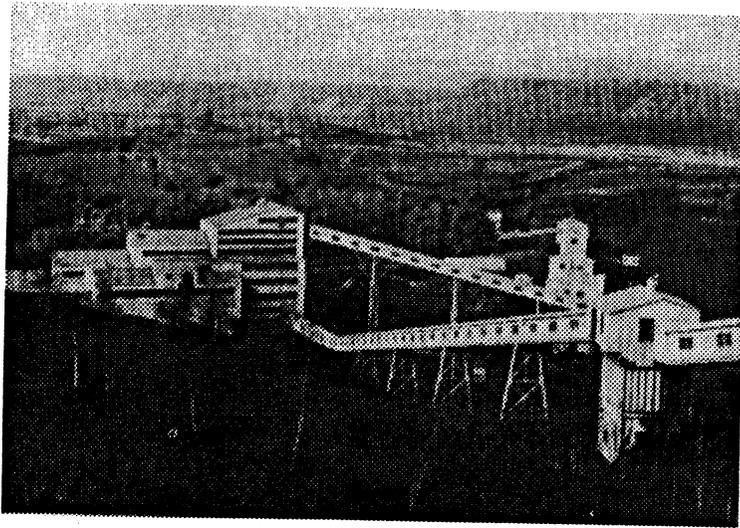
types of furnace or grates upon which it will be burned. Coal was graded into sizes starting with "egg" then down through "chestnut" and "pea" with other intermediate grades, until the finest sizes, such as "rice", were reached. These processes were carried out in huge tall structures called collieries, "breakers" by the natives.

Some way or another raw coal reached the very top of the breaker, either by conveyor or a ramp which carried the mine cars via cables and hoisting machinery. From here, gravity fed the material through the very extensive machinery inside and was finally loaded into waiting coal hoppers on the ground many times some two-hundred feet below! The first breakers were of massive wooden construction, but difficulties with fire, machinery vibrations, and decay caused by the constant flow of water for cleaning the coal eventually led to new steel-framed buildings covered with corrugated iron siding.

Mining operations were carried out wherever the coal could be mined. Breakers and mine entrances were located in the center of large cities, as well as in rural and remote areas. The cities and towns developed around the mine, with the railroads and mine machinery manufacturing plants coming later. Both Scranton and Wilkes-Barre, PA, had mine entrances, large breakers, and large waste heaps just a few blocks away from the main business areas of the towns.

Railroad yards and locomotive servicing facilities were frequently built right next to large breakers, because larger numbers of trains and crews worked from these points. All of this adds up to the fact that an anthracite breaker can be located almost anywhere on a model railroad that has an eastern Pennsylvania theme, with all kinds of scenic and operating possibilities.

Next month, I will present the theories, and information, as well as plans and drawings for the 4'x8' display layout that will feature an anthracite breaker, associated railroad facilities, and some of a town. In the following issues, I will take you, step by step through the processes to build this display, as well as my huge Glen Helen Colliery.



*Top, Left:* This is the most modern Anthracite Breaker still operating in Pennsylvania. It was built in the mid-1960s and still loads out about a hundred cars per day. Construction is steel framed with corrugated steel siding.

*Top, right:* This is the ventilation shaft to a huge steel breaker near Wilkes-Barre, PA. Notice the machinery house is a simple, solid brick structure that is kept unmanned. The large "funnel" is the air-intake shaft.

*Above:* This is an excellent example of a typical smaller anthracite colliery. Notice the many conveyors, power lines, and overall presence of grime and dirt. This breaker still operates. *Photographers unknown, source, internet.*

## Train Orders Items of interest

### Big Sponsor Joins Group

The Great American Train Show has asked the Teen Association of Model Railroaders to be their *exclusive* national co-sponsor for their train shows. The GATS will provide all TAMR members free admittance, "aggressively" promote the TAMR at their info booth, promote us along with their ads in the model railroad press and local newspapers, and provide us with a substantial annual payment of \$1000. The GATS President, David K Swanson, was a TAMR member long ago, and wishes "to give something back to the organization that helped keep me in a hobby I have loved for over twenty-five years."

### Hotbox Article Shortage

Help!!! Guys, I kid you not when I say I absolutely have NO articles in my files to print in the Hotbox. No photos, No drawings, No articles, No anything. Please, please, send me anything. Even if it's just a photo of your layout or a few words about yourself or your modeling, I'll publish it. Come on, get involved, this is *your* organization, after all.

### Changing Hands

Several changes have taken place on the TAMR Board of Directors. Some of you may have already heard some of this, but it's worth repeating.

First off, Brian Bingham retired from the Southern Region several months ago. A new replacement has

finally been found. Ritchie Roesch is the new rep.

The Western Region also has a new representative, as Mike Acree has retired. Matt Silcox, of Victorville, CA, has taken this position.

Finally, Chris Wagner, the Promotions Manager, resigned several months ago. Martin Russin, of Noblesville, IN, has taken his place.

### Student Fare Cancelled

Model Railroader Magazine has scrapped the column "Student Fare" as of their July issue. The column is being dropped in favor of MR's new format. Rick Selby, TAMR member and Student Fare conductor assures us that the TAMR will continue to be covered in the magazine.

### First Division

The TAMR celebrated it's first official division of our organization. Enough members have joined within a thirty-mile radius, with the majority of members residing in Wareham, MA. In fact, most of these members are within a mile of each other, so this division has been named the "One Mile Division". Barry Simmons will be the division director.

### Brad's Home

TAMR Treasurer Brad Beaubien has finished his semester at Ball State U. and has returned home for the summer. You can reach him at (712) 255-7978 or TAMRtreas@aol.com.

## New Members

Ben Rosen

Scale: HO  
Status: Planning  
Era: 91-present  
Visitors: Contact first

Dustin Johnson

Layout: Ontario Central  
Scale: HO  
Era: 91-present  
Status: Operational  
Visitors: invite/appt.

Jeff Linville

Layout: Union Pacific  
Scale: HO  
Era: 81-90  
Status: Construction  
Visitors: Contact first

Mike Hewitt

Scale: HO  
Era: 91-present  
Status: Planning  
Visitors: None

Mike Breen

Scale: HO  
Era: 35-70  
Status: Planning  
Visitors: Invite/appt.

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