

**Pennsylvania Railroad Technical & Historical Society**  
**LINES WEST – BUCKEYE REGION CHAPTER**

\*\*\*\* Bulletin No. 2018-02 May 2018 \*\*\*\*

**Ron Widman, Lines West Buckeye Region Chapter, Newsletter Editor**

**May, 2018 Chapter Meeting:**

Our Next Lines West meeting will be held on **Sunday, May 20, 2018, 1pm to 4:30 p.m. in meeting room “B” of the Upper Arlington library –**

**2800 Tremont Road  
Upper Arlington, Ohio**

Bert Kram, a long time Lines West member, will speak about the PRR Lines in north-central Indiana, including those located in his home town, Frankfort.

Frankfort, Indiana, of course, has become very well-known as a junction and division point on the Nickel Plate Road due to the writings of Tony Koester.

Tony's own basement-sized HO model railroad layout features the Nickel Plate yard and Frankfort industries served there by the Nickel Plate. Bert Kram, who has operated trains on Tony's layout, will speak about the other Frankfort rail lines, to wit the Pennsylvania and Monon. He also will consider the PRR lines in Logansport and Indianapolis, as well as "The Vandalia", and the ties of each to Columbus, OH.

Bert has lived and worked in Ohio since 1966 when he joined a Columbus law firm. From 1967 until his retirement from trial practice in 2001 much of his practice involved representation of a dozen railroads, including among others the Pennsylvania Railroad, the Penn Central, and Conrail.

As always, we encourage members to bring in models, photos and artifacts for display to the gathering.

**We have the annual meeting of the PRRT&HS coming up starting on May 9 in Altoona. Hope to see lots of Lines West members there.**

## **From *The Pennsy* Magazine Collection**

*The Pennsy* magazine contains many facts and figures about PRR history regarding Columbus and the Ohio area, in addition to system wide coverage from the years 1952-1968.

Originated from Room 1417, Suburban Station Building in Philadelphia, the company magazine was sent out monthly to active and retired employees. First published in June of 1952, *The Pennsy* was headed up by Editor Ik Shuman and 7 other members during 1953. The magazine writers and photographers would have undoubtedly traveled on PRR trains over the entire system producing 1 to 4 page stories on many topics. The company magazine informed every one of the latest equipment, developments and news related to the railroad.

*The Pennsy* also printed photos, news of employees at work, new operations, employee outings, hobby's and cartoons in addition to the column *Mileposts on the Pennsy*, focusing on the PRR's 100 + year history.

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The photographic coverage of *PRR System, Aerial Photos* that follows was featured in the October, 1953 issue of *The Pennsy* magazine.

# TWO WEEKS ON A 'SKY HOOK'



Tom Hollyman aims his Rolleiflex camera from open door of helicopter while the PRR below poses for its portrait

## **Photographer on Special Job Soars Over System Making Aerial Photo Record of Postwar Improvements**

*by Tom Hollyman*

You might say it was the same as being dangled by the seat of your pants from a sky hook (if there were such a thing) or you might compare the trip to sitting most of the time in a rocking chair on a magic carpet, a few dozen feet above the ground.

Either way, that was what it was like to take a long two weeks' look with my camera at the Pennsylvania Railroad from a helicopter between Chicago and New York City.

As have many magazine photographers, I've flown both oceans and over a considerable part of the United States, but I had never really experienced the sensation of "flying" until Pilot Bill Barolet took us on this trip out of the Chicago Airport in his three-place Bell Helicopter on the first part of our trip.

Bill is chief pilot for New England Helicopter Service in Hills Grove, Rhode Island. Father of five and one of the country's most seasoned "chopper" pilots, Bill had been home only two weeks pre-

vious to our trip. For over a year he had been flying on geodetic survey missions over South American jungles.

Our job was to photograph at minimum altitude the many postwar improvements and changes that have been made in Pennsylvania Railroad trackage, yards, coal and ore unloading facilities, engine houses, and other installations. The photographs are to be used for the promotion of the Railroad's business.

A superintendent or his representative flew with us as we passed over each division of the railroad to point out the improvements. The three of us sat in a plexiglas dome and left the side doors off to give ourselves a clear view. We also gave a good part of the American countryside a nice view of ourselves, too, and many people looked up at us with astonishment you might think they would reserve for seeing their first Martians.

Following the railroad track which Bill and other pilots regard as an "iron compass", we would swoop down at minimum altitude over rail yards and moving trains like a chicken hawk moving down on a barnyard. When the trackage got complicated or mixed up with other railroads, we used road maps and air maps to find our way.

The first day's shooting hardly got us out of Chicago. We sat down in yards about the city and a truck with gas cans

met us for refuelling. Our cruising range with a full load was about an hour and a half. We flew at 60-65 miles an hour, depending on the prevailing winds.

After a day or two of flying and shooting, Bill developed a photographer's eye for composition. Most of the time he flew on hand signals we exchanged but he said by the end of the trip I didn't need to gesture with my hand when I wanted to photograph something. He swore he could tell from the corner of my eye what I wanted to shoot and exactly where and when I wanted to come down.

What we saw was a large slice of the industrial and agricultural might of the Nation. We hovered over the powerful mills at Gary, Ind., and tracked down the home of almost every automobile make in Detroit. We photographed the huge coal unloading facilities at Sandusky and at Ashtabula and the ore unloading at Cleveland. We looked on Columbus, Fort Wayne, Mansfield, Buffalo, Pittsburgh, Harrisburg, Lancaster, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington and covered the Trenton area on northward to the car ferries in New York Bay.

"We never will find the end of this railroad!" Bill muttered every day right up to the last.

Out of the fourteen days, I believe we had our baggage with us only eight nights. We had built wooden litters in Chicago



...no blind men shouted  
...people are helped by wh  
...me a sinner." Similar to  
...r faith and humbles us  
...exclusively on God w  
...and direct relationship

...ture: Bob Apel  
...y (Grant), Tom Jackso



This view of Greenville Piers, with New York skyline in background, is typical of Mr. Hollyman's photography on PRR

for the side of the helicopter and had intended to carry our bags and perhaps some extra gas in cans around with us. But with three aboard and with the low flying, we kept our weight down and shipped the bags by rail.

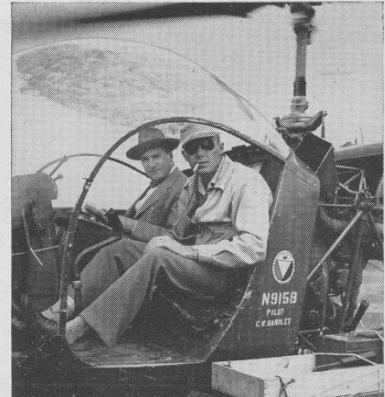
Some days we fully intended to arrive where our bags had been sent for that night, but a loaded schedule or rainy weather would foul our plans and leave us with yesterday's laundry. I accumulated that way too many loud sports shirts bought in the emergencies.

The only shaking scare we had on the whole trip was a cab ride in from the airport to the hotel in Baltimore. For the first time in almost two weeks we had run into traffic and I realized what a pleasure it had been to have no parking problems, no red lights or traffic cops, and no curves in the road. Only riding in a railroad car could have been more carefree for us.

Bill, on his way home to Rhode Island, landed the helicopter in Connecticut and left me and my bags off a short distance down the road from our house out in the country. My wife and small son were on hand as a welcoming committee. It was the most spectacular and awesome homecoming I ever hope to make. For an hour afterward my son followed me around the house without saying a word. The daddy he had known so well had suddenly become a spaceman.



J. M. Kirschner, asst. engineer, Maryland Division, points out best spots for photos

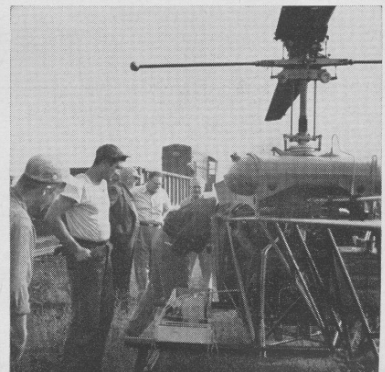


Supt. E. P. Adams, Northern Division, acts as guide in his area for Pilot Bill Barolet

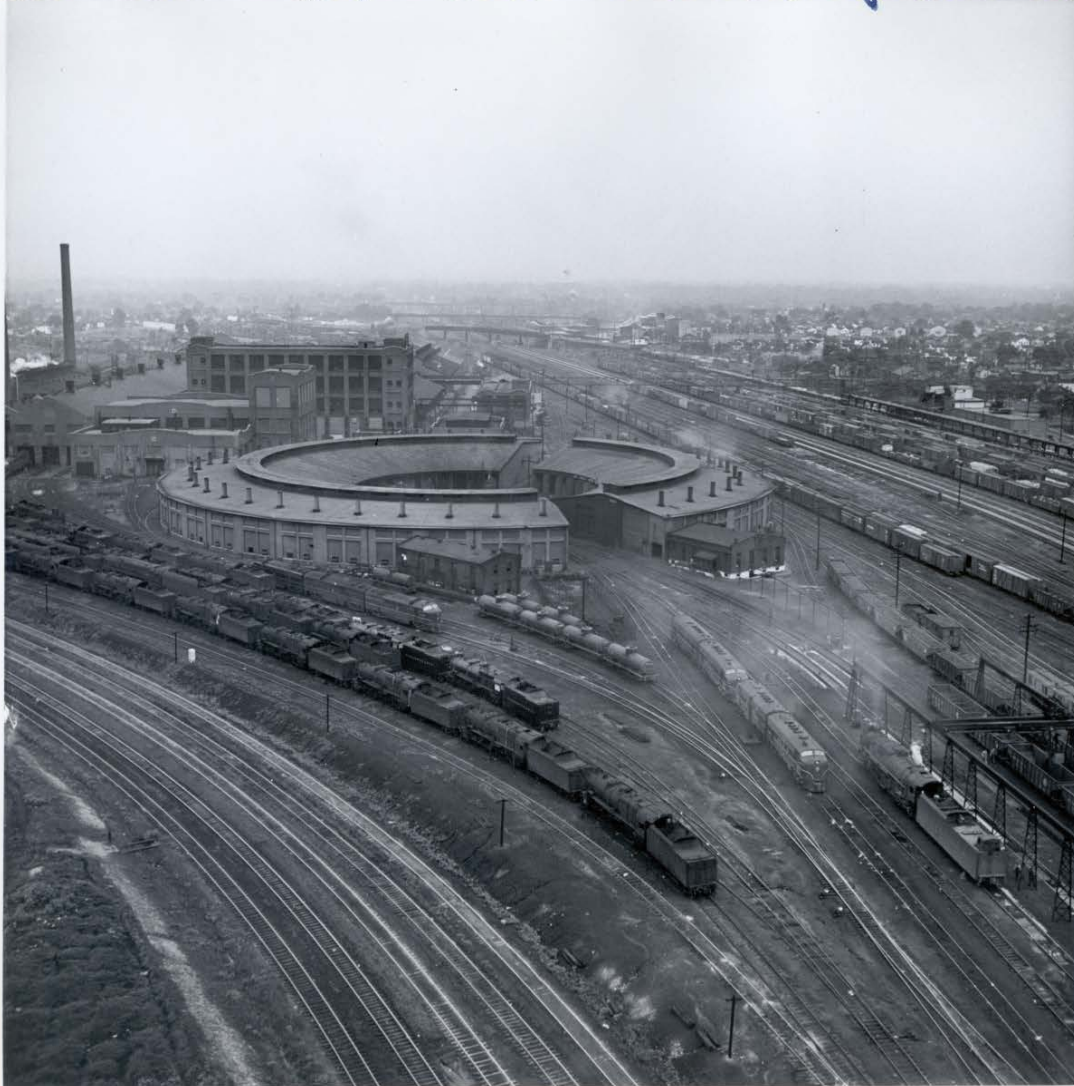
Supt. H. H. Vaughn, Ft. Wayne, studies map with Tom Hollyman while pilot takes on gas



Feet-on-the-ground railroaders show keen interest in helicopter at refueling stop



Job 5321 T124 N 276 St. Clair Ave. Enginehouse Columbus, O.



A helicopter view of the St. Clair Ave. Enginehouse and 20<sup>th</sup> Street Shops, Columbus. Notice the foggy cloud of coal smoke from the Steam Locomotive, bottom right. Photo by Tom Hollyman, 1953.

*The Pennsy* magazine from Ron Widman collection.

Thanks to Lines West member Alex Campbell  
for newsletter & computer assistance.

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PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD TECHNICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY**