

american helicopter  
museum & education center



# vertika

www.americanhelicopter.museum | 610.436.9600

FALL 2019

## a note from *Allison Titman*, our new *executive director*

**S**INGLE ROTOR, TANDEM ROTOR, COAXIAL. PITCAIRN, PIASECKI, SIKORSKY. These are not words that were previously in my vocabulary, or names that meant anything to me before July of this year. After just under four months as the Executive Director of the American Helicopter Museum and Education Center, though, I can confidently use them in a sentence (hopefully correctly).

That is thanks to the warm welcome I have received from the Museum's members, volunteers, docents, staff, and Board, who have generously shared their knowledge and experience. And its visitors, too—I have had the opportunity to learn more about rotary-wing aviation from real experts, such as James Ketchell, a British gyrocopter pilot who stopped at the Museum on his world-record-setting flight across the world, and five-year-old Jimmy, who visits the Museum almost every Friday with his grandfather and is ready to become a Museum docent as soon as we can legally allow him to volunteer.

I do not aspire to that level of helicopter expertise myself; I will leave that to my much-better-qualified team.

What I am excited to contribute is my knowledge of museums—how they should operate, what responsibilities they should fulfill, and how they can serve as both educational and entertaining gathering places for their communities.



The exhibits on the Museum's walls have given me plenty of inspiration for how we can improve our ability to do those things. The images of Igor Sikorsky wearing his bowler hat as he tests early helicopters remind me of the benefit of boldness and the need to experiment with new ideas. The picture of Jean Ross Howard Phelan and the other members of Whirly Girls International standing on the White House lawn with President Kennedy is a testament to the power of

reaching out to share ideas and build relationships amongst people with shared interests.

Now that I am settled into my role at the Museum, I am determined to experiment with new ideas, like Igor, and build community, like Jean. We are trying new events, like October's Haunted Helicopters, and working to ensure that everyone—from aerodynamicists and pilots to the families that live down the street—feels that there is something for them to learn and to experience each time they visit the Museum.

We are also working to strengthen our mission-driven educational programs, which conceptualize helicopters as a gateway into broader science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) topics. Our Science Saturdays have been reimagined as a quick and easy way for kids to get a brief introduction to topics like engineering and astronomy, which they can then build on in one of our more in-depth workshops. Girls in Science and Technology (GIST) will once again fill the Museum with girls learning about science from young women majoring in STEM disciplines at local universities,

(continued on page 2)

# chair's message



**T**HIS SUMMER WAS BOTH A TIME OF TRANSITION AND AN OPPORTUNITY TO LOOK TO THE FUTURE of the American Helicopter Museum and Education Center. Our Executive Director for the last seven years, Sarah Sands, retired in June. Sarah led the museum through our expansion and positioned AHMEC for growth. We welcome our new Executive Director, Allison Titman, who brings new energy and a background in museum leadership. Allison is also President of the Small Museum Association.

At the same time, the staff and the Board of Trustees have been exploring ways to strengthen the museum and make visits to AHMEC a more rewarding experience for everyone. One new event this year is Haunted Helicopters on October 26 and we also added more days when we offered helicopter rides. We continue to add to our audio guides, and volunteers have begun capturing the stories of our visitors and docents who have designed, built, and flown helicopters in development and in service to our country. To reflect the diversity and welcoming atmosphere of AHMEC we are rebranding FatherFest as FamilyFest to indicate it is intended as a fun day out for everyone, not solely for fathers. Our Education Committee has developed several new workshops

including Astronomy and Robotics and we are planning a program for underserved communities modeled after our successful Girls in Science and Technology (GIST) program.

I want to conclude with a different kind of request from my usual plea for financial support. While we still welcome donations of any amount from \$5 to \$5000, the museum depends primarily on volunteers to operate. Whether serving as a docent to lead tours and host birthday parties, participating in the restoration and preservation of our helicopters, planning and leading education programs, helping with special events, or assisting the office staff, you will find joining the cadre of volunteers is a rewarding experience. We have volunteers who give anywhere from one hour a month to several days a week. You can decide how much time you can give and we appreciate any and all help. If you are interested, please contact Volunteer Coordinator Paula Stevens at 610-436-9600. 🌀

*Marc Sheffler*

BOARD CHAIR

(continued from page 1)

who will be mentored by women working in the sciences. And we are constantly brainstorming about how to give more young people access to the kind of education and inspiration programs like this can provide.

On a lighter note, fun events like SantaFest are on the horizon, and we are already planning for next year's gala and the newly-renamed FamilyFest. Our Museum Store is prepared for all of these events, too, with books, tees, and toys for all ages. New die-cast models can be desk

decorations as well as playthings, and new books about local aviation history and iconic helicopters give visitors a way to continue learning more after they leave. I hope you will come visit, say hello, and experience all that the Museum has to offer. 🌀

**Allison Titman**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# museum happenings



**gala 2019**

*a* NIGHT in *Tuscany*  
CELEBRATING LEONARDO DA VINCI





The 2019 Gala theme was, “A Night in Tuscany Celebrating Leonardo da Vinci.” The evening included a cocktail hour, dinner provided by the Desmond Hotel, dancing, and a special appearance by Leonardo da Vinci himself. The evening also included a fundraiser for a proposed new education program for underserved children modeled after our successful Girls in Science and Technology (GIST) program. The 10<sup>th</sup> annual AHMEC Achievement Award for innovation in rotary wing flight was presented to Martine Rothblatt and Tier 1 Engineering for the Electric-Powered R44 helicopter. This unique helicopter was built to quickly transport organs to those that need them at nearby hospitals. It set a new world record for electric-powered helicopter flight and was also recognized with a Guinness World Record.

FatherFest 2019 was held on Sunday, June 16. It featured a Magni M-16 gyrocopter; a home-built RotorWay 162-F helicopter; helicopters from the State Police, JeffSTAR, PennSTAR, and Leonardo; and a Pitts S-2B, Piper J-3 Cub, T-28 Trojan Navy Trainer, and Yak two-seater fixed wings. A classic car and motorcycle show, Out-of-Box Robotics, Locust Lane Brewery and several food and dessert trucks were also a big hit with attendees.

Captain Scott Anderson, Commander of U. S. Coast Guard Sector Delaware Bay, gave two well-attended talks about his experiences in the Coast Guard, and The Falconry Girl, Margaret Young, presented demonstrations with her birds-of-prey. Visitors were also delighted by appearances from Wonder Woman, Captain America, and the friendly dogs from PAWS for People.








1220 American Blvd. | West Chester, PA 19380  
www.americanhelicopter.museum | 610.436.9600

If you would like to be added to our email list,  
please email [info@americanhelicopter.museum](mailto:info@americanhelicopter.museum).

## staff

Allison Titman | *Executive Director*  
Jan Feighner | *Bookkeeper & PR Coordinator*  
Paul Kahan | *Education Program Manager*  
Paula Stevens | *Volunteer Coordinator*  
Gene McInerney | *Development Associate*  
David Vanderhoof | *Museum Store Associate*  
Aura Keller | *Rental Coordinator*  
Nathaniel Lee | *Facilities Custodian*  
John Raum | *Traveling Exhibit Driver*

## board of trustees

Marc Sheffler   <i>Chair</i>	Lawrence Husick
Derek Hart   <i>Secretary</i>	Robert Kodosky
Bob Beggs   <i>Past Chair</i>	Steve Labows
Jeremy Midwinter   <i>Treasurer</i>	JoEllen McBride
Robert Brant	Daniel Newman
Brendan Corrigan	Ron Orndoff
Chuck DiLabbio	Fred Piasecki
Tony Freeman	Fernando Torres

## calendar of events 2019/2020

Visit [www.americanhelicopter.museum](http://www.americanhelicopter.museum) for more information about special events

SAT, OCT 26, 2019

**HAUNTED HELICOPTERS** – Trick-or-treat inside the Museum, which will be decorated for Halloween with skeletons, spiders, and more. Activities include storytelling, movies, spooky music, and a craft activity.

SAT/SUN, NOV 9-10, 2019

**VETERANS RECOGNITION** – The Museum honors the services of veterans by offering them free admission, generously sponsored by Boeing.

SAT, DEC 14, 2019

**SANTAFEST** – Santa lets the reindeer rest and instead arrives via helicopter to hear children's wish lists in our colorful Santa's Workshop. Helicopter rides are available (weather permitting) for an additional fee.

SUN, FEB 23, 2020

**TUSKEGEE AIRMEN BOOK SIGNING & DISCUSSION** – Professor Robert Kodosky will sign copies of his new book, *Tuskegee in Philadelphia: Rising to the Challenge*, and members of the Philadelphia Chapter of the Tuskegee Airmen will be on hand to discuss their wartime experiences.

SAT, MAY 2, 2020

**ANNUAL GALA** – Join us for dinner, music, the presentation of the AHMEC Achievement Award, and more, all to raise funds to support the Museum's mission of preservation, education, and inspiration.

SUN, JUNE 21, 2020

**FAMILYFEST** – Everyone is welcome at an exciting day featuring antique cars and motorcycles, food trucks, a beer garden, sports-oriented inflatable games, helicopter rides (for an additional fee), and, of course, all kinds of innovative aircraft.