

An update from James F. (Curt) Curtis III, President/CEO, Board of Trustees . . .



In the months following our last Board meeting (Myrtle Beach, Feb. 23–25), the Museum has seen more activity and forward movement toward our ultimate goal than the previous forty-five years I’ve served on the Museum Board. And to think all of the following was accomplished during a pandemic with many restrictions—a testament to the commitment of this Board and staff!

Museum representatives visited seven potential sites in Central Florida and retained a real estate broker and attorney with expertise in that region of the country. We engaged the services of a land engineer as well as Boston-based ConsultEcon to conduct a feasibility study for potential Museum locations. Based on a number of considerations, one property was identified and a non-binding letter of intent was executed to secure due-diligence rights to the property, to include a refundable deposit. A geotechnical (soil) investigation was commissioned to confirm bearing capacity of soils and acceptable depth of the water table. A detailed physical survey of the site was completed and confirmed compliance with existing zoning laws as well as compliance with the Development Agency design and use guidelines. We participated in a County Planning Department public pre-application meeting attended by 29 people. An environmental review was commissioned to look for issues related to previous uses, soil or water contamination, cultural resources, wetlands and listed species. The availability of utilities at the site was confirmed, and planned projects around and near the site were researched. A traffic impact study from the master developer was accessed, saving us the cost of commissioning our own study. We confirmed acceptability of our site plan and use (28 versions before arriving at the current concept) with the director of the Development Agency. The Board then commissioned an appraisal of our Fredericksburg property and continued ongoing discussions with both a wing suit (horizontal) wind tunnel operator as well as vertical tunnel operators to join the International Skydiving Museum & Hall of Fame to create a true SkydiveXperienceSM!

And finally, on July 30, the Board of Trustees of the International Skydiving Museum & Hall of Fame voted unanimously to move forward to purchase a highly desirable site for the facility. The property is a high-traffic location in central Florida within the Orlando tourist corridor near many world-renowned attractions.

The Board is excited and pleased to have kept this vital project moving forward during the current global challenges. A lot happening—exciting . . . stay tuned!

2020 Hall of Fame Celebration Set for April 22–24, 2021

The 2020 International Skydiving Hall of Fame Celebration may have been rescheduled for April 2021, but we are full speed ahead with our planning! Here’s what has been happening under the leadership of Events Committee Chair Pat Thomas.

- ◆ Eighteen sponsors have been secured to date: PIA, Skydive DeLand, Skydivers Resurrection Award Group, Pope Valley Parachute Ranch, Sun Path Products Inc., D.J. Associates Inc., SSK Industries Inc., Kirk Knight, Bill Booth/UPT, Ric & Pat Braman, Vigil America, Lee & Carol Schlichtemeier, Ron & Emily Zais, Team Raeford, Law Offices of Robert L. Feldman/Robert & Jeanine Feldman, CYPRES, Performance Designs, and Phil Chiochio/Tyler Chiochio.
- ◆ There are more than 150 people registered already, including 6 gold and tables for 10 commitments. We are also busy securing commitments for Manufacturers’ Row.



(See more exciting event updates on page 4!)

Volunteers Needed to Help Determine Exhibit Content

The Board of Trustees is making important progress toward building and opening the International Skydiving Museum & Hall of Fame. It is now time to start the vital work of determining what will be presented in the exhibits and galleries. We are seeking volunteers to assist with this process as Exhibit Advisors and Exhibit Coordinators.

The process will begin by focusing on the **PIA History of Skydiving Gallery**. The gallery will tell the skydiving story through our people, events and equipment since the 12th century when it all began. To keep the project manageable, our chronology is broken into "Eras," which include Discovery [1100–1907], Barnstorming [1907–1950], Pioneering [1950–1970], Innovation [1970–1990], and Contemporary [1990 and beyond].

However, the gallery is mostly in our heads. With the help of museum design firm Dimensional Innovations, a "content outline" has been created with some highlights of each era and there is a warehouse full of equipment, publications, photos and memorabilia. Our challenge now, as the collection and sorting processes continue, is to begin making the tough decisions on what specifically to put out for display. And it all needs to be vetted.

Our history is so rich that no one person or organization can know it all. But the Museum is fortunate to have some veteran and active skydivers with great knowledge of the history of the sport. We are also fortunate to have specific subject matter experts. These members of the international skydiving community are now critical to this process.

The Museum is seeking volunteers to serve as Exhibit Advisors and Exhibit Coordinators. Their task is to (1) compile era-specific general history and (2) provide subject matter expertise independent of eras. There is a need for both generalists (*Exhibit Coordinators*) who can cover all facets of our history in their respective era(s) and subject matter experts (*Exhibit Advisors*) on the development of a specific piece of equipment, discipline, or program over multiple eras. Exhibit Coordinators will address general sport history, while Exhibit Advisors will address the discovery and evolution of a specific advancement such as the automatic opening device or the sport canopy. Both Coordinators and Advisors are encouraged to seek input of others with subject matter expertise.

Here is what needs to be gathered and compiled:

1. What people made a significant advancement of the sport through innovation, performance or leadership? When and how?
2. What events occurred which would be of interest to the national or international skydiving community, such as the first baton pass, a 200-way, a 400-way, the Gypsy Moths movie, the World Freefall Convention, the invention and development of accelerated freefall training, the first world meet? When did they occur and who organized them?
3. What equipment advances occurred which substantially changed/enhanced the sport?

4. What additional information, corroboration, memorabilia or artifacts are needed? Note: The Museum has collected, sorted and stored thousands of items. With the support of volunteers, the inventory needs to be reviewed and a determination needs to be made of what more is needed.



Cheryl Whitford with the Gypsy Moths Wings

5. Do you know someone else who could expand upon your information if need be?

The Museum has already had Hall of Famer and USPA executive director emeritus Norman Heaton test the system as an Exhibit Coordinator for the Pioneering Era. He solicited Jerry Rouillard, Dick Williams and Scott Hamilton as Exhibit Advisors to verify and assist. It's heartwarming to hear such wonderful recollections—and from different perspectives. Now the Board needs volunteers to step forward for this era and others, either to coordinate or assist.

If you want be part of the future by helping the Museum tell the story of our fascinating past as an Exhibit Advisor or Exhibit Coordinator, please contact cneedels@skydivingmuseum.org with a copy to nkemble@skydivingmuseum.org. Let us know the era or advancement in which you have interest. There is no specific reporting format but having the input in chronological order and generally answering the questions above would be most helpful.

PIA History of Skydiving Gallery Eras



Please keep in mind that eras may run into each other. Some people, events and equipment are part of multiple eras. This will be sorted out once data are received.

Discovery (1100–1907) This was an era when mankind learned about falling objects from high places and how to slow them down.

Barnstorming (1907–1950) With the Wright Brothers' first flight, it soon became apparent that a pilot and/or passengers would need to escape if something went wrong—in other words, the need for a life-saving device: the parachute. It also quickly became obvious that some people would want to jump from a plane for fun or entertainment. Enter the aerial circus and stunt jumpers.

(continued on next page)

Volunteers Needed . . . (continued)

Pioneering (1950–1970) By the fifties, parachuting pioneers recognized the opportunities to parachute for sport. Interest in single parachutist—soon to be known as a skydiver—aerial maneuvers and landing accuracy began to grow, and improved modified round canopies began to appear. Multiple skydiver freefall formation building began to catch on, too.

Innovation (1970–1990) By the beginning of this era, innovators had already demonstrated that canopies did not have to be round. Fabric replications of airplane wings changed the sport forever. This era also greatly expanded what multiple skydivers could do while falling face-to-earth in freefall. Skydivers built formations for

speed and for size, or both. This form of skydiving continues in popularity today. This is also the era in which skydiving equipment technology greatly enhanced skydiver performance and safety.

Contemporary (1990 and beyond) While skydivers began to experiment in head-up or head-down (vertical) freefall early in the Innovation Era, vertical disciplines began to evolve and grow in the early '90s. With the advance in canopy technology, canopy piloting as a discipline of its own grew quickly. With the popularity of freestyle, freeflying, canopy formation, wing suiting, proximity flying and more, there is no telling when and where this era will take us.

Checking in with the Hall of Fame Class of 2020 . . .

The Museum checked in with a few of the members of the Hall of Fame Class of 2020 to see what they have been doing to pass the time during the pandemic . . .

Faye Cox, who lives in Australia, shared, “Been pretty ordinary but enjoyable period during Covid-19 restrictions on numbers. Table tennis club . . . enjoying more time with my beautiful daughter, fiancé and delightful grandchildren . . . relishing the ocean views and sunrises from my verandah bar which is also home to so many wild birds visiting each day . . . gym fitness regime at home . . . great party time and jam sessions with limited number of musical friends . . . cleaning out junk!”



Xiaoli Lai shared, “The last six months have been less than exciting. But this month has made up for it. Last week, my daughter told me she is pregnant! She and her husband will add a baby to their family this spring. We are all excited about this!”



It probably doesn't come as a surprise that **Mike McGowan's** new passion involves photography and the sky. He has been flying drones and photographing the many sights and subject matter there are in Arizona. Mike shared that it is a completely new challenge and offers many ways for him to satisfy his creative nature. Mike said, “I simply love it!”

(Photo by Mike McGowan)

At the end of June, **Bruce Wicks** and his wife, Kay, arrived at Smith Lake in north-west Alabama. They have been enjoying their boat, jet ski, paddle boards and other water toys on beautiful Smith Lake. From time to time family and friends have come to share great times with them. Bruce shared that social distancing has not been a problem on this spacious lake and they feel fortunate to be able to relax, play and have fun until mid-September.



Chuting Times is a biannual newsletter for museum supporters and volunteers.

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**Now Accepting Nominations for the
 2021 Hall of Fame and 2021 Path of Excellence . . .**

Nominations are now being accepted for the International Skydiving Museum's Hall of Fame Class of 2021 and the 2021 Path of Excellence Award.

Only nominations received at Museum headquarters by December 31, 2020, will be considered for induction into the Hall of Fame Class of 2021. The committee will deliberate at its meeting in Spring 2021. The Hall of Fame recognizes and honors those who, through leadership, innovation and/or outstanding achievements, have defined, promoted, and advanced skydiving at the highest and sustained levels such that they have made it possible for generations of skydivers to enjoy the sport.

Nominations for the Path of Excellence (POE) Award are due at Museum headquarters by March 1, 2021. The POE Award is specifically for entities—groups, companies, organizations or teams—for significant contribution(s) of enduring high value to the world of skydiving.

If you would like to nominate someone for the Hall of Fame or the Path of Excellence, please visit our website for further details and a nomination form or contact Nancy (Kemle) Wilhelm, Museum Administrator. All nominations will be kept confidential.

Blue Skies Forever!



Claude Gillard
 Hall of Fame Member 2012

2020 Hall of Fame Celebration Set for April 22–24, 2021 (continued)



- ◆ The Museum has kept in touch with the **Hall of Fame Class of 2020** and they are anxiously awaiting April! Two inductees have already been interviewed by their local papers about their induction into the HOF. See what a few of the inductees have been up to during the pandemic on page 3!
- ◆ **Path of Excellence** congratulations letters have gone out via email to all who participated in the World Team 2006 400-Way Largest Formation World Record. If you did not receive a letter and were involved, please send your email to Museum administrator Nancy (Kemle) Wilhelm at [nkemle@skydivingmuseum.org](mailto:nkemble@skydivingmuseum.org).
- ◆ The design for this year's **event T-shirt** is almost ready thanks to Jen Domenico. The **Hall of Fame blazers and plaques** are being custom-made as we speak. Joe Kittinger, Mike McGowan, Dan BC, and Norman Heaton have committed to do **book signings** and Bill Booth will conduct a **forum**. The Daytona Hilton has committed to a fabulous Hall of Fame Celebration including a breathtaking reception overlooking the ocean. We have selected delicious menus for the BBQ and the Hall of Fame banquet, and the Perfect Spot restaurant at Skydive DeLand is anxiously awaiting our arrival. The **room blocks** at local hotels are now ready for your reservations for the April 2021 weekend. *(Our website has info and links to the hotels.)*

◆ Prior to the celebration weekend, Milko Hodgkinson and Patrick Passe will organize a **60- to 80-Way Sequential Large Formation Event** from April 19 to 23. World Team members or not, skydivers interested in this event can apply to join by emailing patrickpasse@free.fr.

◆ And come early to watch the **Spring Fling Invitational** April 19 to 22 . . . two groups of 16- to 20-Ways with Roger Ponce, Lou Tommaso and TJ Hine.

The Museum remains confident and hopeful that we will all be able to gather in April. Early bird registration ends January 1, so make your reservations now! Visit www.skydivingmuseum.org and visit the Celebration Event tab for more information and to register. We look forward to seeing you in April!