

# Alaska State Museums Bulletin 47

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***Welcome to the final 2011 issue of the ASM Bulletin. As we reflect on this past year (4,023 page views, 503 search engine referrals, 236 hard copy pages) and look forward to a whole new set of Bulletins in 2012, please share your thoughts in the comments section on how we can improve this way of connecting with you.***

## **Educational Outreach Through Real Artifacts: The Hands-On Collection at the Sheldon Jackson Museum**

*By Peter Gorman, Museum Visitor Services and Protection Assistant*

Stone mauls, worn mukluks, replica button blankets, gut skin kamleikas, slate uluit, and Aleut grass socks are among the 500 loanable artifacts in the educational outreach program managed by the Sheldon Jackson Museum. The majority of pieces are not replicas, each artifact has a history. The program was started in 1986 by Museum Director Bette Hulbert and Rosemary Carlton, Museum Interpretive Specialist. The pieces came from bequeaths to the Museum, donations from Sheldon Jackson College alumni, and staff and volunteers who had a long association with the College.



One example is a pair of ivory ice creepers collected by Aaron Taylor Simpson and donated to the collection by his granddaughter. Aaron Simpson taught shoemaking at the Mission School (forerunner to the Sheldon Jackson College) from 1889-1894. He and his wife Margaret were both members of the Alaska Natural and Ethnological Society.

A pair of Athabaskan mittens were given to the collection by a Sheldon Jackson College alumnus:



“These mittens were given to me by mother (Gertrude A. from Nikoli) I used them to go check my rabbit snares and or traps or whatever you call it. It is made out of rabbit fur and leather. Plus the material it is getting to old so I would like to give to SJC Museum.”

The Friends of Sheldon Jackson Museum have been instrumental in purchasing many pieces for the educational collection. One of their first purchases in 1987 was the “Salmon Berry Mask”.



This mask was found 100 feet from the bank of the Yukon River by Bernadette Pete in 1984. It was partially buried in the mud under the boardwalk in the village of Sheldon Point, near Alakanuk. According to Pete:

“The older people in the village said that the mask is called a ‘salmon berry mask’ and was used by adults when they danced to a song about the salmon berries.”

The mask was in three pieces and required extensive repair work by the Museum Conservator. This piece is used only for programs held at the Museum.

In 2009 the Friends purchased for the Museum a large collection of early 20<sup>th</sup> century basketry material that had belonged to two well-known Sitka basket weavers. Included in the collection were dozens of basket starts, bundles of cedar bark, spruce root, and dyed grasses. The best examples were accessioned into the Museum collection and the remainder of the material was returned to the Friends. The Friends in turn exchanged part of this material with weaver Terry Rofkar who in turn made a Ravenstail bag to be used in the hands on collection.



The bag is made with deer skin, white mountain goat wool, buffalo yarn, and yellow green dyed yarn, trimmed with a sea otter top. The pattern on the weaving is the Shadow of Trees pattern. This artifact does not get loaned out but stays in the museum.

Many other artists have also been generous with the donations to the hands-on collection. For example Moses Wassilie donated a Yup'ik drum he had used for a year performing with the Kicaput Dancers and Singers in Anchorage. He felt the drum did not sound right so he gave it to the hands-on collection.

Included in the collection are a variety of natural history objects including furs from most Alaskan mammals, different types of ivory, fish skin, beaver teeth, and different grasses used in basketry.

Management of the collection follows similar procedures used for the main Museum collection. A logbook started on October 18, 1986 is used to track the collection. Each item added to the collection is given a sequential number prefaced with Int- (for "Interpretive"). A file is kept for each artifact with background information on its purchase and donation forms. The artifacts are assigned to the following categories: Northwest Coast, Iñupiaq/Yup'ik, Athabascan, Aleut, and Natural History. There are approximately 500 artifacts that can be mailed out to teachers. The Museum pays the shipping and insurance and the teacher/school has to pay the return postage and insurance. There are also artifacts that are only used in the Museum in Sitka because they are too fragile or valuable to leave the site. Examples include the first cedar bark hat made by Delores Churchill 1974 and a real gut skin kamleika. The entire collection is entered into a Microsoft Access database which includes the location of artifact.

The artifacts used on site for interpretation with visitors and school groups are kept in numbered drawers in the Museum gallery. The remainder of the artifacts are kept in a store room in an adjacent building. Each shelf, drawer, cabinet, and storage container in the store room is numbered. In addition, each artifact is kept in a plastic bag, box, or container and the artifact number and location number is written on the bag. Each artifact has also been physically marked with a number using the same methods as Museum collection artifacts. This system makes it simple to find items for loan and to replace them when they are returned to the Museum. Volunteers have made special foam mounts for the more fragile artifacts so they won't be damaged in shipping.

Since 1986 there have been 1,153 loans with an average of 2,403 participants per year. Over a period of 25 years there have been 60,204 participants in the program with 2,984 artifacts loaned out.

## Ask ASM

*Question:* I want to order a bookcase with doors for a small collection of rare books. I am having trouble recalling and finding information about what materials are ok to use in construction of such cases and where to get one! I have looked at NPS conserve-o-gram and a few other docs I have, but I am still unclear. I know unsealed wood, most types anyway, are bad, but then most sealants off gas too. Which ones are ok? Laminate I believe is ok, veneer seems like it would be bad because of the glue. I went to what I thought would be top of the line library supply company, and they are selling oak bookcases, which I thought is the most acidic wood. So now I am really at a loss as to what to do. Could you please offer some suggestions as to where to find additional information about acceptable materials or where to get a good bookcase for rare books?

*ASM:* Most library supply company exhibit cases are really not up to museum standards because they are mostly trying to satisfy a different type of need. However, there are many aspects to caring for collections and worrying about off-gassing is just one of them. The off-gassing issue would rank low on my worry scale for these books. The main issue is security so my number one priority would be to find a secure, lockable exhibit case. The books might be affected slightly by off-gassing but books and paper products are generally not in danger unless they have a lot of metal on the covers for decorations or clasps. Getting them inside a case (any case) is better than just on a shelf. The case protects them from dust, handling, less light will fall on them and it keeps a slightly better climate in there. My advice is for you to get the best lockable case you can afford. If there is someone who can build them a case, you are right that laminates are the way to go. Laminates are actually better than wood because the laminate keeps all the harmful materials trapped in the fiber board. For more information on acceptable materials and how to build museum type cases, I recommend the National

Park Service's "Conservation Guidelines for Exhibits". You can order a copy of the CD at their website: <http://www.nps.gov/hfc/products/cons/ex-con-guidelines.htm>

Here is a sample of the information from the CD as it pertains to case construction materials. [Tech Note Sample](#)

## Shaking the Money Tree

### Pick, Click, and Give

Now is the time to remind your patrons that they can give to your institution when they file for their Permanent Fund Dividend through the Pick, Click, and Give Program. Think about how you might contact donors or sponsor events that will encourage potential donors to click on your institution when filling out this year's online PFD application. For more information go to their website: <http://www.pickclickgive.org/index.cfm>

## 2012 Talk Story: Sharing Stories, Sharing Culture Grant Applications now available!

For more information and for the application, please see the attached document or visit us at [www.talkstorytogether.org](http://www.talkstorytogether.org)

2012 Grant Information & Application

Sponsored by APALA & AILA

Program Overview

Talk Story: Sharing Stories, Sharing Culture is a literacy program that reaches out to Asian Pacific American (APA) and American Indian/Alaska Native (AIAN) children and their families. The program celebrates and explores Asian Pacific American (APA) and American Indian/Alaska Native (AIAN) stories through books, oral traditions, and art to provide an interactive, enriching experience. Children and their families can connect to rich cultural activities through Talk Story in their homes, libraries, and communities. This grant is aimed to give financial support to libraries and community organizations who want to introduce a Talk Story program into their library, focusing on APA or AIAN cultures.

Talk Story grant funding is available due to the generous support of Toyota Financial Services.

Eligibility

Libraries and community organizations that serve children and their families are eligible to apply. We encourage libraries and community organizations to work together on a Talk Story program.

Please submit an Application and 500 word essay detailing what your library or community organization would do with the award and what types of programs highlighting APA or AIAN cultures you are interested in planning for your community. You may apply for either an APALA grant OR an AILA grant.

Deadline: Applications must be received by February 1, 2012

Award will be announced by March 15, 2012

# Spotlight on Grant in Aid



The Museum of the Aleutians (MOTA) used their Grant in Aid to purchase new equipment: a PL244WF Laminator. The purchase allowed MOTA to meet their large format printing needs to print and laminate all of the changing exhibits materials in-house. Financially it amounted to over \$16,000 saved by the museum, and improved their ability to present high-quality educational information at a low cost, and follow their mission and guidelines.



Photo by Zoya Johnson

Since the purchase, the Museum has presented to the public five changing exhibits all of which were designed and executed in-house by the museum staff. All of MOTA exhibits are posted on the museum website <http://www.aleutians.org/>

## ASM on the Road

Scott Carrlee, Curator of Museums Services went to Pelican in late November to meet with the board and the Executive Director of the Pelican Museum. It was a long ferry ride through sometimes rough seas but it was also a great opportunity to meet with the people who are making this community museum happen.



Although the ferry was only docked for 2 hours, Director Barbara Day Max was on the 7-hour ferry ride back to Juneau, giving extra opportunity for consultation and discussion.

The museum is small now but there are plans to move it into its own (historical) building and to start doing some museum programs at the school or other places around town.



Present Display in the Pelican Museum



Future Home of the Pelican Museum

## Alaska Museums in the News

Push for SLAM funding

<http://juneauempire.com/local/2011-11-23/supporters-preparing-push-funding#.TvO3HtQSouc>

Lawmakers attempt variation on line-item veto

<http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/story/2011-12-07/line-item-veto/51703584/1>

Former Garden Ornament Offers Insight Into Unangan Culture

<http://www.alaskapublic.org/2011/12/08/former-garden-ornament-offers-insight-into-unangan-culture/>

Baskets May be one of museum's most important exhibits

<http://www.adn.com/2011/12/10/2212673/baskets-may-be-one-of-museums.html>

"Deadliest Catch" Star in Fight with Alaska Over Moon Rock

<http://video.foxnews.com/v/1051635090001/deadliest-catch-star-in-fight-with-alaska>

## Professional Development/Training Opportunities

### The 2010 FAIC workshop on "Characterization of Silver Gelatin Photographs"

The program and videos were made possible with grant support from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities, and were presented in partnership with the New York Public Library. Additional videos will be added in the coming months. Here are the links to the first three segments:

A Brief History of Silver Gelatin Papers

by Paul Messier

<http://www.nypl.org/audiovideo/brief-history-silver-gelatin-papers-paul-messier>

Using Historical Information to Identify and Date Kodak Silver Gelatin Developing-Out-Papers

by Kit Funderburk

<http://www.nypl.org/audiovideo/using-historical-information-identify-and-date-kodak-silver-gelatin-developing-out-papers>

Exploring the Artist's Use of Silver Gelatin Photographs (panel discussion)

Nora Kennedy is the moderator and Alison Rossiter, Vera Lutter and Anne Cartier-Bresson are the panelists.

<http://www.nypl.org/audiovideo/exploring-artists-use-silver-gelatin-photographs>

## NEDCC's Spring 2012 Collections Care Webinar Series

The North East Document Conservation Center is offering collections care webinars designed for those who wish to become better stewards of their collections. These webinars are beneficial to staff and volunteers at institutions, as well as private or family collectors.

Thursday, January 26

ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL AND MONITORING

Tuesday, February 7

COLLECTIONS SECURITY

Tuesday, February 28

MOLD OUTBREAKS AND HOW TO COPE WITH THEM

Thursday, March 15

CARE AND HANDLING OF PAPER-BASED MATERIALS

Thursday, March 22 - FREE WEBINAR

WRITING YOUR NEH PRESERVATION ASSISTANCE GRANT

Tuesday, March 27

CARE AND HANDLING OF OVERSIZE PAPER ARTIFACTS

Thursday, April 5

CARE AND HANDLING OF MULTIMEDIA COLLECTIONS

Tuesday, April 17

## RISK ASSESSMENT FOR DISASTER PLANNING

Tuesday, May 1 - FREE WEBINAR - in honor of MayDay!

## DISASTER PLANNING

Time: 2 to 4 PM EST

Cost: \$95 per webinar (\$80 Early-bird registration)

COMPLETE COURSE INFORMATION AND ONLINE REGISTRATION:

<http://www.nedcc.org/education/training/calendar.php>

## 2012 SMAC Professional Network Mid-Career Fellowships

DEADLINE: JANUARY 31, 2012

The Small Museum Administrators Committee of AAM (SMAC) is partnering with other Professional Networks to offer Fellowships for Mid-Career Professionals working in small museums to the 2012 AAM Annual Meeting in Minneapolis.

Two Fellowships will be awarded for mid-career professionals from small museums (budgets of \$350,000 or less) who have worked in the museum field for at least 3 years. These Fellowships are open to volunteers as well as paid staff.

The Fellowships cover basic conference registration, registration for one evening event and one business lunch, a Fellowship Breakfast, and a \$750 travel stipend. All monies must be used to attend the 2012 AAM Annual Meeting in Minneapolis.

The Annual Meeting Fellowships are designed to identify and support these individuals by providing access to the professional development and networking opportunities offered at the Annual Meeting & MuseumExpo™. Through this experience AAM strives to increase their knowledge of the field, match fellows with mentors for career advancement and heighten awareness of volunteer and leadership opportunities within the association that would be of benefit to their career.

### Eligibility:

- Applicant must be an AAM member.
- Applicant must have a minimum of 3 years of experience in museums or museum training programs and may include Independent Museum Professionals.
- Applicant must be either a first-time AAM annual meeting attendee or not have attended AAM's annual meeting in 3 or more years.
- Extra consideration will be given to applicants who are already members of SMAC.
- This fellowship may be awarded to an individual only one time. Applicants may reapply if they have not received the award.

### Fellowship recipients must...

- Attend the SMAC Business Meeting where they will be publicly recognized.
- Provide an evaluation of their annual meeting experience and the professional contributions they have made during the year for use by AAM.
- Provide a review of one session they attended for publication on the SMAC Blog.

To Apply: Visit <http://aam-us.org/am12/fellowships.cfm> for more information about eligibility requirements and application. When applying, you will be expected to provide the following:

- A description of your job responsibilities and how a fellowship would help advance your museum career and benefit your institution.
- A summary of your significant contributions and future plans for service to the small museum community, highlighting any leadership roles. Examples include but are not limited to presenting sessions or teaching; serving on professional committees or association board; publications; and/or mentoring interns and emerging professionals.
- How you will specifically use the opportunity to attend the meeting to assist your colleagues.
- A statement of your financial need.
- Your current resume
- A letter of recommendation from your employer that includes a statement of the value to your institution of your conference attendance.
- A copy of the museum's annual budget or other proof of budget size.

## SAR/IARC Internships

The School for Advanced Research, Indian Arts Research Center (IARC) in Santa Fe, New Mexico offers two nine-month internships (September 1–May 31) to individuals who are recent college graduates, current graduate students, or junior museum professionals interested in furthering their professional museum experience and enhancing their intellectual capacity for contributing to the expanding field and discourse of museum studies. The internships include a \$2,200 monthly stipend, housing, book allowance, travel to one professional conference, and reimbursable travel to and from SAR. One internship is open to an indigenous individual from the U.S. or Canada, and one internship is open to any U.S. or Canadian citizen meeting the application requirements.

Established in 1978, the IARC houses a collection of more than 12,000 items of Native art of the Southwest. The collection includes pottery, jewelry, textiles, works on paper and canvas, basketry, wood carvings, and drums. IARC supports research and scholarship in Native studies, art history, and creative expression. IARC accomplishes this by providing opportunities for artists to engage in uninterrupted creativity through artist fellowships; fostering dialogue among artists, researchers, scholars, and community members through special seminars and programs; nurturing future arts and museums professionals through experiential training; and promoting study and exploration of the IARC collection of Native arts.

The interns will devote their time to working on IARC educational programming, research and writing activities, and collections management and registration. Other requirements include presenting a research paper at the SAR Colloquium Series; attending a professional conference; assisting with IARC seminars, symposia, and collection tours; and working on outreach initiatives to local Native communities. Interns will also participate in interviews, photo sessions, video recordings, and exit interviews to document their experience. During the internships, the Anne Ray Resident Scholar provides mentorship and academic support to the interns.

Applications must be received by March 1, 2012. For additional information, please visit <http://internships.sarweb.org>.

# Summer Intern Report



*Nichelle Rich, from Seton Hall University, spent her summer at the Valdez Museum & Historical Archive, in Valdez, Alaska*

June 13 – August 19, 2011

My chief focus while working at the Valdez Museum was the continuation of an ongoing cataloging project supervised by Andrew Goldstein, Curator of Collections and Exhibits at Valdez Museum & Historical Archive. With extensive use of PastPerfect V museum software, I set about cataloging items in the Museum's collection and assigning accession numbers when applicable. By the close of the internship I had cataloged approximately 1000 objects, maps, and artworks from the collection. Cataloging included, in some cases, a good deal of research, for most items a photograph was needed, and all items needed to be properly repacked for storage. A majority of the internship was spent organizing and cataloging the Map Files, two large file cabinets containing maps, archives, posters, prints and artwork; essentially everything that is too large to fit on regular shelving. The last couple of weeks interning were spent working on the WESC, World Extreme Skiing Championships, collection, the luggage collection, and part of the natural history collection.



Special projects at the museum included assisting with the installation of the Exxon-Valdez Oil Spill Exhibit; specifically I helped hang some hard hats from the Museum collection. I was also allowed to attend a Museum board meeting in July where I discussed with the board what I had been working on thus far at the Annex. And I did a small carpentry project that entailed attaching Old Valdez guidebooks to the Plexiglas cases of the Old Valdez town model, located in the Valdez Museum Annex. Guidebooks were attached via hooks and metal chains screwed into the base of each case. I had a really fun time working on all of the smaller projects, especially since it allowed for brief breaks in the cataloging assignment.

Over the summer I was also able to participate in several programs the Museum was offering to the public and staff. I attended an archaeological lecture at the Valdez Museum in June, and participated in several Gold Rush Days activities through August 3-7. I enjoyed watching the parade on the 7<sup>th</sup> and attending a special walking tour of the Old Valdez homes that had been transferred to the New Valdez Townsite. The museum

staff was also fortunate enough for the opportunity to ride the "Quake Cabin" that the fire department rented. The trailer simulates earthquakes which the fire department uses to educate school children about the 1964 earthquake and to let them experience what it might have felt like to be in such a large earthquake. I still can't believe that the 1964 earthquake lasted more than five minutes!

Valdez was outstanding and I am so glad I was able to spend a summer there. I got in a good deal of hiking on my days off and after work, and I especially enjoyed walking out Mineral Creek Canyon and Shoup Bay trails. Volunteers Gloria and Tom Macalister lent me a bicycle which enabled me to visit Valdez Glacier, the Old Valdez Townsite and ride out to the Alyeska Pipeline Terminal. Near the end of my stay I took a cruise with Stan Stephens Tours out to Meares Glacier. Overall the internship was a wonderful educational and personal experience.

# Standard in Excellence Program (StEPs)

The museum standards program of the American Association for State and Local History.

Archived webinars for the following topics:

- Creating Historic House Interpretive Plans that Connect
- Telling a Good Story
- Hope is Not a Strategy: Raising Money in a Challenging Economy
- Juggling Balls and Other High Wire Acts: How a Well-crafted Collections Management Policy Can be the Safety Net that Saves Your Collection
- Roadmap or Wheel of Fortune? Which Would You Stake Your Organization's Future On?

<http://www.aaslhnetwork.org/steps/category/recording/>

## Professional Time Wasting on the Web

There is a museum for everything!

<http://moisttowelettemuseum.com/>

Time To Tweet The Art: Museum-Analytics.org Keeps Tabs On Curatorial Social Media

<http://techcrunch.com/2011/11/28/time-to-tweet-the-art-museum-analytics-org-keeps-tabs-on-curatorial-social-media/>

Oakland Museum of California Collects Boring Stories (That Are Interesting). Watch the funny video that includes a fish!

<http://www.baycitizen.org/blogs/culturefeed/oakland-museum-california-patrons-tell/>

Fascinating video about the artist De Wain Valentine and the making of a giant resin cast sculpture. Very high production values!

<http://www.getty.edu/pacificstandardtime/explore-the-era/archives/v65/>

Modern Art in Los Angeles: An Evening with De Wain Valentine. Second video about the conservation of the sculpture. Mostly an interview with the artist

[http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications\\_resources/public\\_programs/evening\\_valentine.html](http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/public_programs/evening_valentine.html)

Tlingit mask fetches high price

<http://www.canada.com/entertainment/Aboriginal+mosquito+mask+fetches+French+auction/5867440/story.html>

Do we need everything?

<http://uncatalogedmuseum.blogspot.com/2011/11/do-you-need-every-single-thing.html>

A radical formula for pop up museums.

[http://museumtwo.blogspot.com/2011/11/radical-simple-formula-for-pop-up.html?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+museumtwo+%28Museum+2.0%29](http://museumtwo.blogspot.com/2011/11/radical-simple-formula-for-pop-up.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+museumtwo+%28Museum+2.0%29)

WMA 2011 Annual meeting keynote address-- Our Collective Remembering: Five (K)new Ideas for World Transformation

<http://westmuse.wordpress.com/2011/09/25/wma2011keynote/>