The Alaska museum community celebrates International Museum Day again this year with a collaborative project showing the diversity of our institutions across the state. Museums submitted photos taken on “Museum Snapshot Day,” April 20th, and Museums Alaska compiled them all into an online album linked through Museums Alaska’s website: www.museumsalaska.org.

This is the second annual Museum Snapshot Day project, a partnership between the Alaska State Museum and Museums Alaska. Along with the online album, five museum photos are highlighted on the home page of Museums Alaska.

In 2012, we highlighted the Baranov Museum in Kodiak, the Anchorage Museum, the Juneau-Douglas City Museum, the Pratt Museum and the Kodiak Maritime Museum. In 2013 we are highlighting the Beringia Center of Culture and Science, the Maxine and Jesse Whitney Museum, the Alutiiq Museum, the Carrie McLain Museum and the Sheldon Museum and Cultural Center.

Enjoy your tour through the photos! Both the 2012 and 2013 albums are on our flickr site, accessible straight through our home page. Happy International Museum Day!

Click the image or [here](#) for a direct link to the 2013 Museum Snapshot Day gallery on flickr.
Director’s Note

Last month I had the pleasure of returning home from the Juneau legislative session via Haines. With three straight days of bluebird skies, I enjoyed the fast ferry 2.5-hour “cruise” from Juneau, a full-day in Haines, and a leisurely 3-day trip through BC, Yukon and back to Homer. Well, leisurely is always the pace with those frost heaves!

While in Haines, I did some reconnaissance on our upcoming conference. Jerrie Clarke was a fantastic host and we sampled local fare at Fireweed Café, a community favorite, attended a theater performance at our conference site and met with her Board of Directors and staff who have been furiously working to make our annual meeting in Haines a memorable and seamless affair.

I can report on great hiking (and can now advise where the human trail stops and game trails begin), gorgeous setting, and a wonderfully walkable community. I’m really looking forward to the conference September 25-28 and celebrating Museums Alaska’s 30th Anniversary with you!

Enjoy this issue of Network and the great accomplishments of your colleagues across the state. As always, thank you for your continued support of our statewide museum association.

Heather

Launch of 2013 Art Acquisition Fund

Museums Alaska is pleased to announce that the Art Acquisition Fund continues in 2013, thanks to generous support from Rasmuson Foundation. This year, $265,000 will be available for grants to qualified Alaska museums and cultural centers for the purchase of contemporary Alaskan works of art.

The program for 2013 began on May 13 and applications will be accepted for consideration and awarded on a rolling basis until the deadline: Friday, August 16, 2013.

The guidelines and application for 2013 are similar to those of last year and are posted on Museums Alaska’s website.

Last year, the Art Acquisition Fund distributed $300,000 to twenty-two museums and cultural centers which, in turn, purchased more than 90 works of art from over 50 Alaska artists.

Since the program began in 2003, the Art Acquisition Fund has supported the purchase of 635 works of contemporary Alaska art by 284 resident Alaska artists with distribution to Alaska museums and cultural centers totaling $1,596,045. These are funds that not only make possible the enrichment of the state’s museum and cultural center collections, but the funds also go directly to Alaska artists, encouraging them to continue their work in Alaska.

Applicants are encouraged to become members of Museums Alaska, if not already, though it is not required for a grant award. Membership is easy on our website. Help us continue to develop programs that benefit the Alaska museum community and the cultural sector.

QUESTIONS?

Contact Program Administrator Mike Hawfield at:

hawfield@horizonsatellite.com

PO Box 853

Homer, AK 99603

(907) 299-0290
President’s Message

I sit looking out my window at what should be a Fairbanks robin’s egg blue sky and 60+ degree weather. Instead, I see snow showers. Despite this bad news, I’m feeling inspired for a fantastic summer of sharing our museum collections with visitors from around the world.

Alaska’s museums are among the most vibrant and community-based in the country. The natural, cultural, and artistic heritage we are tasked with preserving is diverse, spectacular, and relevant to global discussions. Our visitors will remember their time in Alaska for the rest of their lives and each of you will contribute to those memories.

Despite bleak funding forecasts on the national level, Alaska’s own Rasmuson Foundation continues to support Alaskan artists and local non-profits through their Art Acquisition Fund (administered through Museums Alaska) and Individual Artist Awards. Watch in the coming months for a new initiative funded by the Foundation that will provide additional assistance to museum collections around the state.

Thanks go out to our Program Committee members who are assembling an exciting set of sessions for attendees at the 2013 annual meeting in Haines, as well as the Haines Host Committee, headed up by Jerrie Clarke. We all look forward to returning to Haines for our 30th birthday.

Have a wonderful summer and remember to take some time for yourselves!

Angela Linn, Museums Alaska President

Come Together in Haines!

Save the date! The annual conference will be in Haines this year, September 25-28, 2013 and we will celebrate Museums Alaska’s 30th birthday!

The conference planning committees have been hard at work. Look for more details in our Summer Network.

Thanks to all our members who submitted session proposals for the conference. Our theme is: Coming Together For Museums, and keynote speaker is Michael Gates, who has served for 20 years as Curator of Collections at Klondike National Historic Sites. He has pioneered to restore collections and conservation positions at Parks Canada. See you in Haines!

Museums Alaska

2013 Program Committee
Co-chairs:
Monica Shah, Anchorage Museum
Scott Carrlee, Alaska State Museums
Members:
Andrew Goldstein, Valdez Museum & Historical Archive
Jerrie Clarke, Sheldon Museum and Cultural Center
Amy Russell, Beringia Museum of Culture and Science
Heather Beggs, CJ Jones, Dave Pahl and Haines Host Committee members

“Alaska’s museums are among the most vibrant and community-based in the country.”
A MAP for the Future at the Seldovia Museum

Jan Yaeger, Seldovia Museum
Seldovia Village Tribe

The Seldovia Museum, a program of the Seldovia Village Tribe, is taking part in the Museum Assessment Program (MAP) managed by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM). The program is designed to help small and medium-sized museums improve operations, lay groundwork for the future and work toward meeting national standards. The MAP process takes approximately a year, and includes completing a fairly detailed self-study and a visit from a peer reviewer who provides a formal report to AAM. There is a sliding-scale fee, with no charge for museums like ours with annual budgets under $125,000.

Scott Carrlee from the Alaska State Museums came to Seldovia April 4-7, looked at all aspects of our Museum and provided terrific feedback and ideas for programs and projects (if you’ve ever met Scott, this won’t surprise you at all). We are already working to address some of the artifact safety issues he identified, and will be using his report as a guidebook as we develop our new strategic plan.

Although even by the metric of Alaska community museums we are a small institution, we welcome approximately 5000 visitors a year. We are committed to meeting high standards so that we can better serve both our local community and our guests from far-off places. The Museum Assessment Program has been a great opportunity to look at what we’re doing right and what we can do better, and to help us organize our priorities. Participation in the MAP program also provides access to a wide variety of resources, as well as the very helpful staff at AAM.

If you’re interested in learning more about the MAP process, visit http://www.aam-us.org/resources/assessment-programs/MAP

The next deadline to apply is coming up July 1.
New Library Museum in Seward

Patricia Linville, Director
Seward Community Library Museum

The history of Seward is now being told in one new building. And what a building it is…shimmering translucent tiles glitter in the sun and sparkle in the snow. Historic photos of Benny Benson and the Seward of 1903 greet visitors as they enter. A large mural depicting the “Irresistible Story” adorns the south facing wall. All intended to represent the varied history of the area and the awesome potential of the future.

“The Seward Community Library Museum (SCLM) is a community center with the facilities and resources to provide its users with the opportunity for continuing education, community enrichment, and the preservation of Seward’s heritage.” Project planners started work on the plan to build the facility during the 2003 Centennial of the founding of Seward setting a completion date for 2013, the Centennial of the incorporation of the town. The $10M project was funded with major grants from Rasmuson Foundation and National Endowment for the Humanities. Most importantly, the local capital campaign raised over $500,000 and the community approved a GO Bond of $3.7M, quite a feat for a town of 2000. Obviously there are many supporters within and outside of our city limits.

Library services and use of the community space began on January 13. The old library was closed a month earlier, with staff and volunteers sorting, packing and hauling in preparation for the moving company. Restacking the shelves and organizing the work areas was done quickly by staff and volunteers to get ready for welcoming patrons into the new facility. Slowly the details are falling into place. New adult non-fiction, funded by Rasmuson and mostly recommended by local requests, is slowly being added to the shelves. The new microfilm reader is up and running, a new Early Literacy Computer has been installed in the Children’s room and the video conferencing system for the meeting room is connected. These last two features are compliments of the OWL program, a statewide effort to increase bandwidth throughout Alaska. Meanwhile, library use has increased 35% over this time last year. Room use is 80% over last year and new reservations come in daily keeping staff very busy.

The new Seward Museum, including exhibit space, work and secure storage areas is opened on May 11, which allowed time to set up exhibits and organize the work and storage areas. Library Museum staff and a large, very dedicated cadre of volunteers have worked tirelessly to get ready. The “teaser” window is doing just that, teasing. Staff has displayed sculptures of local people, both famous and infamous, that are made from railroad spikes welded together. People are frequently seen peering in, past the display to see what is happening in the museum. Though these pieces, crafted locally during the seventies, could be found in both the library and museum collections, they have never been displayed together. The display is a great example of the potential of the new space with the integration of library and museum collections and services.

The best part of this project has been the amount of volunteer help received. From attending planning meetings, testifying before local and state officials, canvassing neighborhoods, fundraisers, packing and moving, and everything in between, the people of Seward stepped up and made this project an enjoyable journey. We look forward to continuing it with them.
Nicole Femster is a local artist contracted to do the mural (see previous page). She graduated from Seward High and UAF. The community has painted the mural at two different community events.

These carpenters are discussing how to build museum platforms that will hold our historic display cases. They were part of “platform raising” as opposed to a barn raising…

CONGRATULATIONS!
Sheldon Museum’s Six-Week Spotlight

Jerrie Clarke, Director

The Sheldon Museum’s Six-Week Spotlight series began on April 19th with Digital Art Photography by local photographer William McRoberts. His solo exhibition will be up through June 1st. He will be followed a week later with “Faces and Figures,” paintings by Donna Catotti who is known for her serigraphs, pastels, and oils. Her exhibition will run from June 7th through July 20th. July 26th through September 7th will be the final artist of the season, Tim Shields who is known mostly for watercolors and oils but will use other media for this show to create wildlife, landscapes and surreal images.

The Six-Week Spotlight series was implemented in 2006 to provide a venue where local artists can show their work during tourist season. Applications for solo and duo shows are evaluated by an outside juror who selects three exhibitions. A special exhibition of art from the Museum’s permanent collection, most of them purchased through the Rasmuson Art Acquisitions Initiative, will be on display during the Museums Alaska / Alaska Historical Society Conference in September.

Carrie McLain Museum in Nome celebrates

King Island Genealogy

Laura Samuelson, Director

On March 11th, 2013 the 69-year-old Carrie M. McLain Memorial Museum, celebrated “Memories of King Island” by unveiling the original Fred Machetanz oil painting of revered King Island Chief Aulagana. The portrait is on long term loan from Wells Fargo Bank and The Alaska Heritage Museum at Wells Fargo. Long time Museum volunteer Little Sister Alice Sullivan presented the genealogy of the King Island Community dating back to 1852. Her 30 years of work culminated in a genealogy of over 1,000 people and their familial relationships. The event was topped off with a film of King Island in its heyday presented by local film historian Ray Paniataaq.

“Long time Museum volunteer Little Sister Alice Sullivan’s... 30 years of work culminated in a genealogy of over 1,000 people and their familial relationships.”
Harbor Tour Goes Mobile in Kodiak

Toby Sullivan, Executive Director

Kodiak Maritime Museum is implementing a new mobile web-based walking tour of the Kodiak waterfront. Beginning in April, the Kodiak Harbor Mobile Tour will allow visitors to use their cell phones to scan printed QR codes posted in several places around the harbor, which will automatically take them to web pages specially formatted for cell phone screens. The web pages will display maps, images, audio, and video files about Kodiak’s harbor and the people who live and work on our waterfront. The free tour will be available 24 hours a day, year round, with a demo up and running this spring.

Plans call for the Harbor Mobile Website Tour to have ten distinct web pages corresponding to specific locations around the harbor which are relevant to the history of Kodiak’s waterfront. The first part of the tour to be installed will feature maps, photographs and oral histories about the earthquake and tsunami which devastated Kodiak’s waterfront in March 1964. Other themes will eventually include the rise and fall of Kodiak’s King Crab fishery and the role of salmon in Kodiak’s history. The tour will illustrate these themes through the personal stories of ordinary people—fishermen, cannery workers, store owners and others who have lived and worked along the waterfront from the 18th century to the present.

Funding for the project comes from the Kodiak Island Borough and local sponsors.

The technology for the mobile tour comes from a San Francisco company, Guide By Cell. Guide By Cell previously hosted an audio cell phone tour for KMM featuring the voices of the people in KMM’s “Faces of the Kodiak King Crab Fishery,” exhibit. This exhibit has been shown in several places around the state, most recently at the Loussac Library in Anchorage.
The State Library Archives Museum (SLAM) project broke ground on January 16, 2013 and construction is underway in Juneau!

Click the image to the right for a video postcard of the event.

News coverage link:
http://juneauempire.com/state/2013-01-17/state-breaks-ground-slam-project#.UZaa2cp6bNT

More images at:
http://museums.alaska.gov/LAM/slam/photos.html
Encounters: Whales in Our Waters

Homer may be able to boast more articulated skeletons—particularly marine mammals—than any other town in Alaska. Perhaps it is because Kachemak Bay, near the confluence of Cook Inlet and the Gulf of Alaska, is not only temperate and accessible, but enjoys protection as part of the National Estuarine Research Reserve system. Or maybe because residents of this area are familiar with local animals; they can identify cetaceans, respect their space, and know to contact the local marine mammal stranding network to aid in rescue and research efforts. Perhaps it is due in part to local “bone man” Lee Post, who has articulated countless skeletons, written books on the subject, and led community articulation projects through the Museum, high school, and college. It is certainly due to the willingness of community members to get involved in their environment by participating in those projects; to learn about this environment in the nurturing community of like-minded souls.

This past February saw the debut of Homer’s newest articulated resident: a 38-foot long gray whale. But it didn’t just arrive in town. Many residents first encountered this whale many years ago.

In the summer of 1999, a juvenile male gray whale had been seen acting strangely around Halibut Cove. On June 22, the captain of a water taxi reported a dead whale in Halibut Cove Lagoon. Following quick decisions at the museum and permission from the National Marine Fisheries Service, a group of volunteers set out to collect the whale. Over 50 people helped with the salvaging, cleaning, and transportation. Most of the bones were then placed in crab pots and lowered into the bay, though the flippers were buried in horse manure to the same ends. After this “natural cleansing,” they were retrieved and weathered for a year, then scrubbed clean, catalogued, and stored. In 2004, they were individually photographed and consolidated.

Then, in the spring of 2012, Lee Post gave a presentation at the Pratt Museum on what a community-driven articulation would entail. Although only 15 people signed up to help out with the project that day, over 20 showed up for the first day of work. Between July and August, an ever-changing group of volunteers—from the dedicated to the unwitting summer visitor—put in over 900 hours of volunteer labor to articulate the whale, in a workshop too small to accommodate it in its entirety. In January 2013, 25 volunteers showed up to manually carry the pre-assembled pieces of whale from the workshop to the gallery. The skull, two long sections of vertebrae, and two flippers were guided across an icy parking lot and up a short flight of stairs. Over the next few days, the ribs were reattached and the pieces suspended in the gallery. For the first time in over 13 years, Homer’s gray whale was whole again.

(continued on page 11)
“Encounters: Whales in Our Waters” explores the many cetaceans that frequent Kachemak Bay. From plentiful porpoises to the rare and endangered beluga, acrobatic humpbacks to the shy minke whale. Visitors can learn about each of these whales, and hear from scientists, conservationists, and Natives about their personal experiences with whales. The exhibit invites visitors to use research techniques on a whale watching trip, and listen to Native stories to understand the deep importance of these creatures.

With over 2200 hours of volunteer labor from salvage to exhibition, this whale is more than a piece for scientific study. It is a testament to the dedication of this community, a celebration of what can happen when the Homer community and the Pratt Museum work together to better understand our shared environment. Plus, it’s pretty awesome!

“Encounters: Whales in Our Waters” will run at the Pratt Museum through July 21, 2013.

Considering its size and the scope of this project, many people are surprised to learn this is only a temporary exhibit. In July, Homer’s gray whale will be divided into pieces once again, but not for too long. In 2016 it will be reassembled as a permanent fixture in the Pratt Museum’s new building.
ANLAMS Sponsors two participants to the Sitka Annual Meeting

The Alaska Native Libraries Archives and Museums Summit (ANLAMS) brought people together from all over Alaska who were committed to supporting these types of institutions that serve Alaska Native Communities. The Institute for Museums and Library Services (IMLS) sponsored the original summit meeting which was held April 27-30 of 2011 in Anchorage on the UAA campus. There were over 150 presenters and attendees who shared information, ideas, and meals in a collegial atmosphere. After the summit a number of events have carried on the spirit of ALAMS. One of these was the sponsorship of staff members from two Alaska Native run museums to attend the Museums Alaska annual meeting in Sitka. The two sponsored attendees were from the Yup'ik Piciryarait Museum in Bethel and the Duncan Cottage Museum in Metlakatla. Below, in their own words, is a description of how they benefited from attending the meeting.

Mary Woods, Museum Coordinator
Yup'ik Piciryarait Museum
Bethel

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to attend the Alaska Historical Society & Museums Alaska Joint Annual Conference at Sitka, Alaska. Some of the sessions that I attended were, Remembering Katmai, Sitka History and Archeology, Legal Issues in Collection Management, Russian America, and Rural Traveling Exhibit.

I got to visit the Sitka Historical Society Museum/Gift Shop, Sheldon Jackson Museum and Totem Park where I was able to see all the beautiful totem poles and walk in the park. I've visited all over Alaska and I always thought that Homer, Alaska was the most beautiful place I have been to, until I went to Sitka and loved every minute that I was there. It was breathtaking and absolutely amazing. As soon as Eva Malvich and I came back here to Bethel, I told her that we have to go back to Sitka one of these days and she agreed with me. I was hoping I would have been able to volunteer at one of the museums while I was there but the time went by too fast and I was unable to.

I was able to pick up a lot of information from this conference and I learned a lot from all the sessions I attended. I don't know if you know this but I have to use a lot of hats where I am working and one of them is putting together exhibits. I learned a lot when I attended Alice Parman's session on Exhibit Makeovers. Jackie Manning did an excellent presentation on Rural Traveling Exhibit on having exhibits when traveling to rural areas. I learned a lot about making mounts, using foam and other supplies when preparing for an exhibit. She also provided resources on where to order supplies and that was very helpful to everyone. She was very knowledgeable and supportive especially by answering questions from the variety of people that attended her session.

Naomi Leask, Director
Duncan Cottage Museum
Metlakatla

The Alaska Historical Society & Museums Alaska Joint conference was very beneficial because I was able take away ideas and information that I could put to use right away for my short term goals, and also I could realistically start rethinking my long term goals. Being that my background is in education not museum work I think my goals needed a little adjusting. I definitely learned a substantial amount of information from other people especially when we had small group discussions or activities. Having the presenter give a presentation then break us up into smaller groups gave us a chance to discuss issues and ideas. It was helpful because we came from all different backgrounds and perspectives and it gave me a glimpse into what it would be like working with our community on any type of exhibit changes.

Attending the Exhibit Makeovers Workshop was something that I was looking forward to and I am excited to put what I learned to use because it will be my first real contribution to adding to what's in our museum. I don’t necessarily think that our exhibits need to change because they serve the purpose well and it helps guide our story. But, what I want to do is add too them with more visuals like pictures and short videos or sound clips. I have my own ideas in mind as to what needs to happen but the idea of getting the community involved came up more than once during the conference and I really love that idea because that way the community can feel some sense of ownership as well. Overall I am really grateful to have participated in the conference because I not only learned more, but I was able to reconnect with people who I know and I also met new people.
Alaska Collections Emergency Response Team

Norm Lagasse and Jodi Jacques

Experienced a disaster within your library, archives, museum, historical holding or cultural center and overwhelmed by it all? Who ya gonna call? Certainly not the ghost busters! But you could now call the Alaska Collections Emergency Response Team or AKCERT. Never heard of them? That’s OK because it’s a brand new group.

There’s a new capability within our great State to assist institutions in just those situations when disaster strikes and you’re just not sure where to turn. Enabled by support from the Rasmuson Foundation and the State Museum, Scott Carrlee, Curator of Museum Services for the Alaska State Museum, is assembling and training a team of experts from a variety of disciplines to help institutions like yours deal with a myriad of disastrous situations affecting collections and the respective facilities in Alaska.

What could you expect from this team? The initial training for Anchorage and Fairbanks team members was completed in April and the Juneau team member training should be completed by late Summer. The CERT training provides a thorough orientation to the Incident Command System (the same system used by First Responders), some personal and situational (on-site) safety training as well as initial mitigation response training. That provides institutions with a group of individuals that can respond in person or virtually to assist you, your staff and your organization in dealing with your collections disaster.

As initial training is completed and the individuals gel into response capable teams the near term goal is to exercise the teams on a quarterly basis using institutional information provided by you. AKCERT will establish an organizational dossier outline that you can fill in to provide the team with helpful planning information should they have to respond to and support your facility. This information could include basic floor plan(s), hazardous materials list, special handling requirements, facility images for team orientation and planning and any other information you think would assist the team in responding/supporting your recovery efforts.

Depending upon the location and situation it may only be possible for a few or none of the members to physically arrive on scene after a disaster. That doesn’t mean they can’t still help you deal with the situation. Think of these team members as virtual, knowledgeable staff that can assist your institution in locating response assets (freezer trailers, banker boxes, freezer paper, wet-dry vacuums, pallets, etc.) and preparing them for shipment. They may be used as a panel of SME’s (subject matter experts), your virtual Think Tank as it may be, that can help brainstorm ideas, solutions, approaches and advice to assist you and your local volunteers during collections recovery and mitigation.

So what’s next for AKCERT? The team will complete initial training and some organizational domestics as they prepare to receive and e-file (probably using DropBox) your respective organizational information to begin preparations for table-top exercises (Yes it would be very beneficial to them and to your organization if you participated) and pre-disaster planning. Keep you ears to the wire as this capability develops and prepares to respond.

Join with the National Endowment for the Arts and Blue Star Families to become a Blue Star 2013 Museum by providing free admission to active duty military personnel and their families between Memorial Day and Labor Day.
The Statewide Museum Association

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Renew your membership today at museumsalaska.org/membership

We couldn’t do it without you!

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Comings & Goings: in the next Network

You’ve heard the news, seen the postings. Six leadership positions in museums and cultural centers across the state are turning over this year. In the Summer Network we’ll thank our outgoing leaders and welcome any new recruits! Be sure to send in any staff changes at your organization by June 15th to help us with this special issue.

Check the Museums Alaska website for up-to-date job postings!

The Tanana-Yukon Historical Society (TYHS) organizes the 15th annual Fairbanks "Museums Day" when a dozen local museums get ready for the season by opening free to the public on Saturday, May 25th. A family friendly quiz gets local residents out to see what’s new and plan for visiting friends and relatives.

Sven Haakanson, Jr. at the Alutiiq Museum is one of six museum directors in the state changing course this year.