

Remembering Bea Shepard

Museum advocate extraordinaire, Bea Shepard (93), passed away last month. For years, with Clark Gruening, she stormed the halls of Juneau's capitol hill, successfully convincing legislators that the State Museum, Library and Archives were worthy of funding. She went to bat for the Grant-In-Aid program and many capital projects and programs. She served on the boards of Museums Alaska and the Alaska Historical Society. In her 80's, when she wanted to retire from the MA board, we only let her go after she promised to continue her advocacy efforts!

Beatrice Louise (Bea) Shepard, former Advocacy Chair for Museums Alaska, was born in 1919 and died November 1, 2013 in Juneau of heart failure.

Bea graduated from the University of California - Berkeley in 1940 with a degree in Zoology. Her last college course in bacteriology set her on a lifetime career. There she learned techniques in the first lab that grew tuberculosis cells preparing her for the fight against TB in Alaska. Bea applied for a bacteriologist job with the Alaska Territory Department of Health. She arrived in Juneau in November of 1946 with her friend and roommate Claudia Kelsey and began a career with the Territorial and State Departments of Health as a microbiologist and chemist.



Bea Shepard, left, at the 1997 MA conference in Sitka with Donna Matthews (former MA executive director) and Elva Scott ('97 Volunteer of the Year).

In 1951 Bea and Claudia traveled throughout the state for the U.S. Air Force to write "Wild and Edible Plants of Alaska", a manual provided to pilots flying in Alaska. Bea worked as the chemist for the project, Claudia provided the botanical expertise and detailed botanical illustrations and Dr. Christine Heller was the nutritionist. Their work can still be found in books used by the University of Alaska Extension Service.

Bea was a docent at the Alaska State Museum and Advocacy Chair for Museums Alaska for many years. Clark Gruening said "Bea was instrumental in obtaining funds for and pushing forward the new Alaska State Museum in Juneau." In her last several years she created the Aunt Claudia Doll Museum, to preserve Claudia Kelsey's over five hundred dolls.

Bea co-wrote Praise the Lord, Pass the Penicillin, Have Gospel Tent Will Travel, and 100 Years of Alaska Methodism. At the time of her death, Bea was writing a history of the Eagle River Methodist Camp. She wrote for the "Living and Growing" column in the Juneau Empire, professional papers and chapters for other books. Bea was an advocate for many causes and Alaskan legislators were regularly blessed with her opinions.

Bea was an avid photographer and applied her craft both in her career and as a hobby having her own dark room. She loved to read and seldom passed up a chance to buy a book. History of the Civil War and Alaska were two of her favorite subjects to learn about.

CJ Jones and Deborah Garris

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Museums Alaska
Executive Director,
Heather Beggs

*“Museums
challenged to
manage their
collections have a
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assistance.”*

Director's Note

Museums Alaska has been hard at work since the conference in Haines. With the launch of the Collections Management Fund we've seen confirmation again that Alaska's museums and cultural centers have exceptional need for conservation and collections management assistance. We're working with the Rasmuson Foundation to secure funding for the next three years of the program, building on this year's successful process. A dedicated committee of Museums

Alaska members thoughtfully reviewed all 2013 applications and we have plans to improve the application process and guidance in 2014.

As you'll read, our Advocacy Team has also been hard at work, planning a Juneau Fly-In (see page 4) and complimentary advocacy activities for your institutions at home. We need your participation to create a united voice for museums and cultural centers in Alaska, so we hope you'll join

our efforts in any way you can.

Enjoy the articles in this issue of *Network* from our conference scholarship winners. We are growing our scholarship fund to support more conference travel next year for your professional development.

Please keep Museums Alaska in mind as you make your year-end contribution choices.

Happy holidays!

Heather

Collections Management Fund

Museums challenged to manage their collections have a new source of assistance, with the launch of the Collections Management Fund. The new fund was created by Rasmuson Foundation and is managed by Museums Alaska.

This year, \$100,000 in grants were awarded museums and cultural centers in Alaska for collections management supplies and activities. The goal is to build capacity for managing collections through professional expertise, training, and con-

servation materials and supplies. The new Collections Management Fund builds on the success of the Art Acquisition Fund. Since 2003, the Art Acquisition Fund has provided \$1,596,045 to Alaska museums and culture centers for purchase of 897 works by 463 Alaska artists.

2014 deadlines are:

March 31, 2014

September 30, 2014

2013 Awards:

Alaska State Museum	\$5,400
Anchorage 1% for Art Program	\$4,800
Anchorage Museum	\$6,500
Baranov Museum	\$9,500
Beringia Center of Culture and Science	\$5,500
Clausen Memorial Museum	\$6,000
Cordova Museum	\$4,100
Hammer Museum	\$5,000
Juneau-Douglas City Museum	\$8,700
Palmer Museum	\$9,500
Pratt Museum	\$9,600
Seldovia Village Tribe Museum	\$4,400
Tongass Historical Museum	\$8,800
UA Museum of the North	\$5,000
Valdez Museum	\$7,200



President's Message

By now, those who attended the AHS/MA Joint Annual Conference in Haines have had time to bring back to your communities some good ideas shared by colleagues and maybe even put some into action. The Board of Museums Alaska is working to make progress on several projects as well.

Under the leadership of a number of dedicated professionals, the Advocacy Committee has been working to coordinate a Legislative Fly-In day in Juneau, to communicate to our legislators the value of Alaska's museums.

The first round of grantees to the Rasmuson Foundation-sponsored Collections Management Fund have been notified of their successful projects and the review committee looks forward to another round of applications in March 2014. Fund administrator and Museums Alaska Executive Director, Heather Beggs, will be refining the application package to ensure an even better pool of proposals in the coming year.

This innovative program promises to bring much-needed funding to museums small and large.

As we move through the holiday season and into 2014, be sure to renew your Museums Alaska membership, as well as those with your regional and national professional organizations. These support groups help keep you connected to the museum field, even when you feel like you're out there on your own. Remember to call on your colleagues around the state and across the nation – new ideas are being developed every day. The next big one could be in our own back yard.

Happy Holidays to you all and from the Board of Directors, we wish you success and happiness in 2014.

Angela Linn, Museums Alaska President

“Support groups help keep you connected to the museum field, even when you feel like you're out there on your own.”

Seward hosts 2014 conference!

Save the date! The annual MA/AHS joint conference will be in Seward next year, **October 1-4, 2014.**

Let us know if you're interested in serving on the Program Committee. We meet January through May developing conference sessions and choosing a keynote speaker.

We're happy to hear your ideas on sessions, speakers and other ways to improve the conference. Please use the conference evaluation form at:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?fromEmail=true&formkey=dFpEUFpEY0RSVGJWbnBXcDBRNEpyOGc6MA>



Check out the Spring 2013 Network for great photos of Seward's new Community Library Museum building at <http://museumsalaska.org/2013/05/17/spring-2013-network/>

Juneau Legislative Fly-In!

The Museums Alaska Advocacy Team has been working tirelessly through the fall to plan our first-ever Legislative Fly-In. We are collaborating with the Alaska State Council on the Arts, Alaska Humanities Forum, and Alaska Historical Society to make a big impact on our Legislators about the importance of arts and cultural organizations in the state.

JOIN US! All are welcome and we really encourage you to come if you've never been to the Capitol or dipped your toes in the great pool of advocacy with your elected officials. Now is the time to do it! We are providing training, we'll work in teams to visit legislators, and learn a lot from participating as a group.

Museums Alaska members can secure discounted lodging at a cabin we've reserved at The Shrine by RSVP-ing early.

Email advocacy@museumsalaska.org TODAY!

Schedule

Wednesday January 29, 2014

- Morning training at Juneau Arts and Humanities Council
- Lunch n' Learn for legislators
- Afternoon visits to legislative offices

Thursday January 30, 2014

- Visits to legislative offices
- Governor's Awards in the Arts & Humanities (evening, optional) at Juneau Arts & Humanities Council

The Shrine is reserved for the nights of January 29 and 30. Rate will be approximately \$35. RSVP today to join us!

Join us in Juneau!

- *Training provided*
- *Group visits to legislators*
- *Discounted lodging*



The Business of Museums

**Amy Steffian, Director of Research and Publication
Alutiiq Museum & Archaeological Repository**

A few years back, a national pizza chain produced a witty television commercial. In this age of hidden costs and add-on fees, their message stuck with me. Here's what I recall.

A customer walks into a pizza parlor and orders the \$10 pizza deal.

Clerk: "Thank you. That will be \$17!"

Confused customer: "I thought it was \$10!"

Clerk: "That \$10 pizza is \$17!"

Confused customer pointing at another pizza: "How much is that \$10 pizza?"

Clerk: "That \$10 pizza is \$22!"

You get the point. As consumers we are faced with a barrage of purchasing decisions some with confusing, hidden, or down right frustrating costs. Every time we pay for something, we evaluate the cost. Do I check a suitcase with the airlines? Do I use my ATM card? Is it worth the fees? The economic down turn in recent years has encouraged businesses to generate revenue in new and creative ways, and trained consumers to carefully assess the value of everything from pizza toppings to museum admission.

Dan David, Manager of Visitor Services & Retail Operations at the UAF Museum of the North, and Adam Baldwin, Director of Enterprise & Visitor Services at the Anchorage Museum, explored earned income in "Taking Care of Business," a Museums Alaska conference session designed to make us think about how museums make money. The discussion centered on admission rates.

Both presenters stressed the importance of charging enough for admission, of not under selling the museum visitor experience. It may sound counter intuitive, but raising your admission rates may actually encourage attendance and help people to recognize the value of the services you provide. A low admission fee may signal that your product is not as valuable as one that costs more.

How do you determine the right rate? The presenters acknowledged that every museum must choose the appropriate admission fees for their organization and community. One size does not fit all. However, value is important. Visitors need to feel that they are getting their money's worth.

Whatever rate you charge, there are three essential components of any museum admissions program. First, communicate with visitors. Share your rates openly and widely. Let people know what you charge and how it supports your mission. Train your community that the museum is a valuable destination and what they can expect to pay to visit. Second, provide outstanding customer service. Every visitor should be welcomed by a helpful, friendly person and treated as if they are taking the trip of a lifetime. Third, review your rates periodically to make sure you are not subsidizing visitor entrance fees unnecessarily.

What if charging higher admissions fees for the members of your small, supportive community feels uncomfortable? Then consider adjusting your rates to provide a local preference. Don't price locals out of the museum by trying to capture tourist dollars. There are creative ways to take care of your community visitors. The Juneau Douglas City Museum is free from October through April and only charges admission during the summer tourist season. The Alutiiq Museum finds business sponsors to purchase free community admission three months out of the year, and both the Anchorage Museum and the University of Alaska Museum of the North have discounted rates for Alaska residents. In Anchorage, Alaskan families can even check out museum admission passes from local libraries.

And don't forget the add-ons. Like a buffet of pizza toppings, museums can earn additional income by creating special options. Charge more for specific events. Sell visitors an audio tour. Work with other organizations to create a partner ticket that provides admission to two attractions.

In short, Dan and Adam, urge all of us to "run it like you own it." It is okay to charge admission to an amazing place. Making a profit on museum services does not detract from your mission, but supports it. Every dollar you generate can be reinvested in the work of your museum.

"Raising your admission rates may actually encourage attendance and help people to recognize the value of the services you provide."

How do you determine the right admission rate?

Haines Conference 2013!



**Happy 30th,
Museums Alaska!**



Museum Professionals as “Rock” Stars

**Susannah Dowds, graduate student
Northern Studies, UAF**

Every once in a while a museum worker picks up the phone and hears something out of the ordinary. In Steve Henrikson’s case, the voice on the other end said: “Folks, the moon rocks have landed.” Between 2010 and 2012 Henrikson, Curator of Collections at the Alaska State Museum, worked with the FBI, NASA and other organizations to resolve a dispute about moon rocks in the Alaska State Museum Collections. This particular phone call came from a law enforcement agent in Washington DC who oversaw the return of these lunar souvenirs after they had been illegally taken to an island in the South Pacific.

As you may have guessed, the story of the Alaska State Museum’s Apollo 11 moon rocks involves not just the first mission to the moon, but also a statewide tour in 1969, a museum fire in 1973, a former “Deadliest Catch” boat captain and a high-profile court case that ended in 2012. In short this was the perfect object for the Museums Alaska session: *Small Exhibit, Big Story: Using Single Artifacts as a Narrative Focus*.

During the session, presenters discussed how a single museum object could introduce a variety of concepts within an exhibit. In addition to Henrikson’s presentation on moon rocks, Andrew Goldstein, Curator of Curator of Collections at the Valdez Museum spoke about a credit card machine that had weathered the 1964 Good Friday Earthquake. Both presenters had some star power (extraterrestrial or otherwise) associated with their objects. While Henrikson had consulted with NASA, Goldstein worked with the Travel Channel’s “Mysteries at the Museum.”

The Valdez Museum credit card machine was unearthed by two visitors at the old town site in 2004; they donated the artifact to the museum in 2005. Inside the machine was a credit card left by a resident who fled as soon as the earthquake and tsunami shook the town. Goldstein and the Valdez Museum were able to find the former credit card owner and later appeared on a Travel Channel episode to solve the “mystery of the forsaken credit card.”

The credit card machine alone was a compelling reminder of citizens’ panicked run to safety during the earthquake, but Goldstein observed that the artifact’s television appearance had added to the story, inspiring more visitors to see the real thing. Objects hold a certain legitimacy, and exhibits make these artifacts available to the public. In addition, throughout time objects can adopt different meanings. Henrikson observed that these “meta-histories” often become part of the object, the moon rocks for example, could lead to stories of extraterrestrial exploration, Alaska state history and FBI forensics. All add interest, versatility and richness.

While the focus of this presentation was objects and exhibits, I couldn’t help thinking about how museum work can take an unanticipated turn. Consulting with NASA or the Travel Channel does not appear in any museum job description, but objects and exhibits tell the unexpected. As a result, museum workers are constantly learning and investigating new threads. The fruit of these investigations: exhibits, communicate these unexpected stories to visitors, sometimes with just one object.

**“Exhibits
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Susannah on top of Mt. Ripinski in Haines



Credit card machine at the Valdez Museum

Perspectives in Writing

**Marnie Leist, Curator of Collections
Alutiiq Museum & Archaeological Repository**

Consider two exhibit labels. Both introduce former Alaska Governor Walter Hickel, both present the details of his public service, but only one gives you a feeling for Hickel's passion. Which label would you want to read? Which label would you remember? How else could you write the label?

Sample exhibit label 1:

Walter Joseph "Wally" Hickel (August 18, 1919 – May 7, 2010) was an American businessman and politician. Hickel was born in Kansas and relocated to Alaska in 1940. He owned a construction company and became involved in real estate development. He joined the Republicans in the 1950s during the development of Alaska's statehood. In 1968, he became the U.S. Secretary of the Interior under Richard Nixon.

Sample exhibit label 2:

"A man who is cold, hungry and unemployed is in a bad environment. I don't care if he is living on Santa Barbara beach. I believe you could literally eliminate poverty from this earth." More than a businessman or politician, Wally Hickel was visionary with big bold ideas. He saw in Alaska a model of what the world might be. Entering politics in the early 1950s, he pushed Alaska through to Statehood. As the U.S. Secretary of the Interior under Richard Nixon, he boldly challenged the Vietnam War. He aimed for America to have a "sense of mission" to develop global sustainable commerce.

What *exactly* am I writing? Who am I writing for? These pesky questions usually arise when we are faced with having to hunker down and produce exhibit text, the museum's newsletter, or the next blog post. The Museums Alaska Writer's Workshop, an hour and a half session of retrospection and speedwriting, encouraged participants to explore new approaches to prose. Leading the effort, Michelle Lee Dent, a professor at New York University, prompted participants to pick a memorable object from their Haines experiences, and write about it from three perspectives. First we described the object. Then, we explained the object to another person, as if we were writing a letter. Finally we asked a question about the object. Giggling at a fellow writer's description of a grotesquely large bathtub in her hotel room, marveling at the way a cedar log becomes a mask, or feeling tears form as I listened to unbelievably moving paragraphs about a writer's love for his daughter, gave me new insight. Different writing styles and perspectives can inform museum writing, they can help us transform information into stories. Good writing engages a reader.

That tear evoking story stuck with me. I will never forget how I went from sitting in a hard folding chair feeling somewhat weary, to a state of rapt attention - eyes wide open, mouth gaping, throat swelling, and tears forming. I was transformed from placid to roused by a few quickly, but well written words. Compelling stories create great connections. They link people to subjects, and if we do it well, with treasured collections, inspiring exhibit, and even our museums.

*"I was transformed
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**Michelle Dent leads the
Writing Workshop at the
Museums Alaska confer-
ence in Haines.**



Grant Workshop: Strategies for Working with Funders

**Hayley Chambers, Curator of Collections
Sitka Historical Society and Museum**

A common denominator between museums large and small is the need to secure funding in order to develop programs, create exhibits, care for artifacts, hire interns, and perform other essential duties. More and more museums are seeking experienced grant writers or calling upon staff to meet this critical need. This one day comprehensive workshop was designed to help participants, whether they are beginners or seasoned professionals, learn how to submit winning proposals to federal, state, and local agencies. The workshop was moderated by Scott Carlee of the Alaska State Museum, Ann Myren of Resources and Results Consulting, and Cecily Stern of Wordcraft Consulting Service, each of whom provided invaluable insight into best practices for a successful grant.

Prior to arriving in Haines, all of the workshop participants were instructed to bring a real-life grant, including the application and budget guidelines, to the conference. The expectation was for us to use the time allotted to write for a project we would be requesting funding for in the coming year. The day was broken up into hour-long segments in which the three speakers spent ten minutes explaining the phases of the grant life cycle. They discussed topics such as articulating the “need,” writing a project description, developing a budget, and evaluating the results. The participants were then allowed 45 minutes of writing time, followed by five to ten minutes of group discussion. The working lunch consisted of an overview of the do’s and don’ts of grant management.

For me, working in a small museum, I often get caught up in the day-to-day activities of being a curator and I find it difficult to just sit down and write a grant. In fact, it’s nearly impossible. This workshop gave me an entire day to focus solely on the project at hand. Having writing time interspersed between the lectures kept me engaged, while also forcing me to think critically about my museum’s project and reinforcing the topics we reviewed. Additionally, the feedback from the moderators and the other workshop participants helped me to refocus and refine the scope of my project. My confidence has been restored and I am now eager to pursue funding opportunities to further the mission of my museum.



Hayley Chambers

Here are some insider tips to help demystify the grant process:

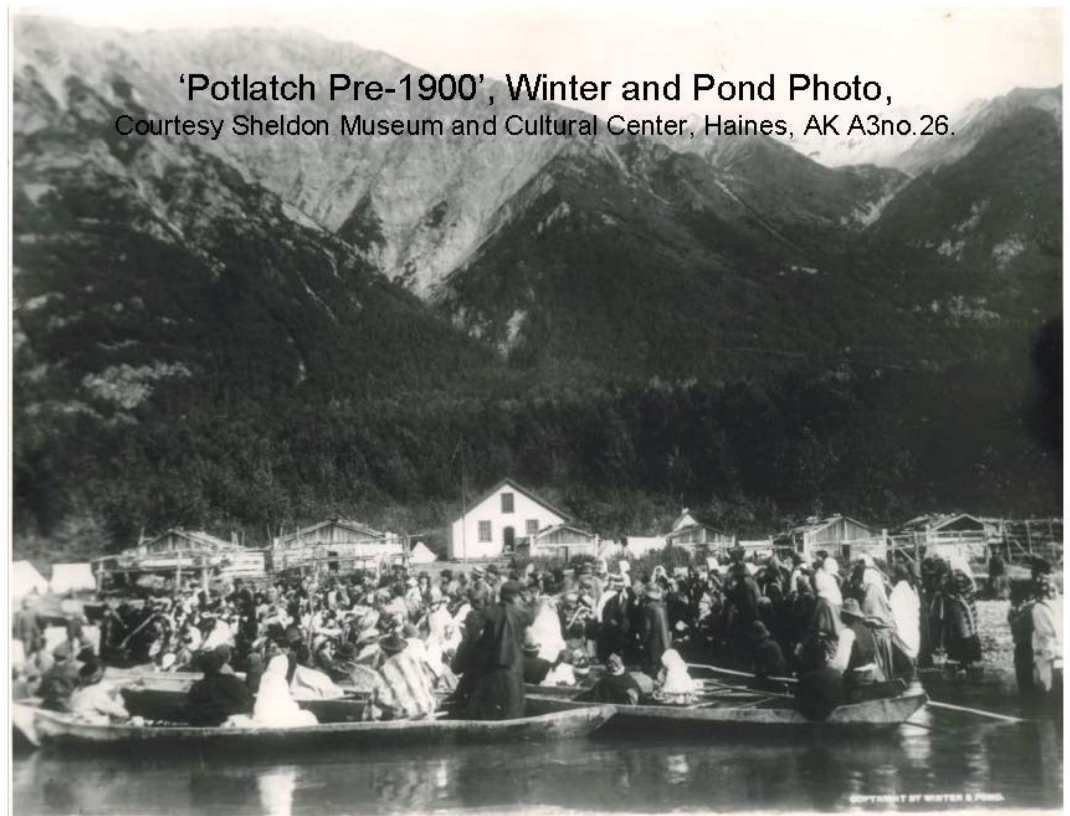
- Develop a plan first. Take time to assess needs, form partnerships, or map out activities. A successful project will be well planned and feasible.
- Ensure that your proposal is aligned with the donor’s funding interests/ mission.
- Address the guidelines of the proposal with a program officer.
- Create a checklist for the grant components to help you stay focused and on track to meet the grant deadline.
- Clearly and succinctly state the need of the grant. Your proposal should answer questions, not raise them.
- Avoid using jargon. Clearly define terminology when jargon is unavoidable.
- Proofread the final product.
- Organize, organize, organize! Good recordkeeping is essential to a successful project.
- Acknowledge funders when publicizing your project.
- Grants can be very competitive and not all applications will be funded. If you aren’t funded, find out the reasons why.
- Most importantly, don’t give up. You will never win a grant if you don’t apply for it.

Kaatx'waaltú, the '2nd Village' of Klukwan: At the Crossroads of Archaeology, Ethnology and History

Anastasia Wiley, PhD

Written records regarding the Chilkat Tlingit village of *Kaatx'waaltú* are rare and what has been said is misleading. The Krause brothers during their 1882 scientific survey as they walked the Chilkat trail continually stated that first they reached the 'second village' and shortly after they reached Klukwan. The first Alaskan census by Ivan Petrof states that there were 8 houses and 125 people at this village in 1880. A popular pre-1900 Winter and Pond historic photograph of the village, which is centered on a white milled wooden western-style structure flanked by at least five traditional plank houses, appears to support this statement. The foreground is filled with canoes and people gathered for a ceremony, presumably a potlatch. This is the village representation that is frequently used to characterize *Kaatx'waaltú* since it seemed to match recorded descriptions. However, a search of the archives at the Sheldon Museum and Cultural Center has produced an additional historic photograph dated about the same time (1895) that shows at least 50 buildings hugging the Chilkat River which strongly contradicts this common view of the village. This talk presented the results of archaeological, ethnological and historical investigations by the 2013 Native Archaeological Training Program and how these disciplines contributed to solving this discrepancy. This annual summer program is sponsored by UAS Juneau, Chilkat Indian Village, Chilkoot Indian Association, Champagne-Aishihik First Nation, Sealaska Heritage Foundation and Sheldon Museum and Cultural Center, Haines, Alaska. (continued online)

If you missed the conference session, the full paper and slides are available for viewing at www.museumsalaska.org.



Small Exhibit, Big Story: TAKE 2!

Molly Conley, Historian & Collections Manager
Alaska Office of History & Archaeology

People love stories. We always have. When paired with compelling stories, museum artifacts can be elevated from archaic remnants of the past to powerful tools for bringing stories to life. Age, value, and physical beauty are irrelevant; visitors connect with artifacts through the stories they tell. In the session *Small Exhibit, Big Story*, Andrew Goldstein of the Valdez Museum and Steve Henrikson of the Alaska State Museum and discussed artifacts their institutions highlight to tell captivating stories.

At the Valdez Museum, visitors come from near and far to see a credit card machine whose story captures the drama of the 1964 earthquake. The credit card machine was recently found at the Old Valdez town site. Amazingly, it still had a credit card in it. Museum staff tracked down the owner of the card and uncovered the story of her experience during the earthquake.

It's a story we can all relate to. A woman realized she had forgotten her credit card at a gas station and headed back to town to retrieve it. After the earthquake began, a local resident made her turn around. As it turned out, the gas station was washed away in a devastating landslide. Had the woman been there, she may not have survived. Her story reveals the chaos, danger, and in some cases, luck, that people experienced during the 1964 earthquake.

The State Museum features the story of recently returned moon rocks from the Apollo 11 mission. The small moon rock exhibit highlights not only the original story of how the moon rocks came to Alaska but the story of their disappearance, re-emergence, and the long route they took to be returned to the museum.

It's a story of mystery and intrigue. After the Apollo 11 mission, President Nixon gave moon rocks all 50 states, including Alaska. The moon rocks toured the state before going on temporary display at the Alaska Transportation Museum in Anchorage. The museum burned down in 1973, but witnesses recalled seeing the moon rocks after the fire. A few days after the fire, the moon rocks went missing, and their whereabouts were unknown until recently. Strangely, they had been in the possession of a former *Deadliest Catch* star for the last several decades (his stepfather had worked at the Alaska Transportation Museum at the time of the fire).



From left to right: Molly Conley, Andrew Goldstein, and Hayley Chambers reunite at the Haines conference. The excitement of a Valdez reunion seems to have produced two articles on this session! (see page 7)

Getting them back to the museum required litigation as well as cooperation with NASA and the FBI for authentication.

Both artifacts have had their share of press. The credit card machine was featured on a recent episode of the Travel Channel's *Mysteries at the Museum*. The return of the moon rocks made state-wide and even national news. Because of this large-scale exposure, these artifacts are popular with both locals and tourists.

Small Exhibit, Big Story was a fun and entertaining session with several valuable takeaways. Highlighting artifacts with memorable stories can be a highly effective exhibit strategy. A great way to display these items is at the beginning of an exhibit, where the story can be used to introduce key themes. But these artifacts don't have to be part of larger exhibitions. They can also be part of smaller or even stand-alone exhibits if they tell great stories. Publicizing these artifacts and their stories is a great way to draw in visitors. It worked on me - hearing the stories of the moon rocks and credit card machine made me want to see these artifacts in person.

“When paired with compelling stories, museum artifacts can be elevated from archaic remnants of the past to powerful tools for bringing stories to life.”

Anchorage Museum Selects New CEO

The Anchorage Museum Association (AMA) Board of Directors has named Julie Decker as director of the Anchorage Museum at Rasmuson Center.

Decker, former Anchorage Museum chief curator, replaces James Pepper Henry, who took a director position at Phoenix's Heard Museum in August. Decker served as interim director following Pepper Henry's departure.

Decker was selected to head the museum after an international search conducted by m/Oppenheim Associates of San Francisco. She will serve as both chief executive officer of the nonprofit AMA and director of the city-owned museum.

"We are very pleased Julie Decker is stepping into this role, and we believe she has the experience, leadership ability and commitment to the community to guide the museum into an exciting future," said AMA Board Chair Susan Knowles.

"Julie's international connections and extensive curatorial background combined with her long history initiating innovative Anchorage Museum programs and exhibitions made her the standout choice. She will lead the museum beyond its recent expansion to position it as a key cultural institution in the Circumpolar North and a leader for discussions of the North throughout the world."

The Anchorage Museum Collections Department is also extremely happy to welcome two new staff.

Maria McWilliams is the new loans Registrar. Maria worked for the Anchorage Museum previously, overseeing loan and exhibit registration from 2007-2009. For the past 4 years she has been at the George Gustav Heye Center in NYC (National Museum of the American Indian-NMAI). Previous to her time in Anchor-



age she was a registrar at NMAI, where she helped inventory and move their entire collection from NYC to DC.

Sarah Owens, post-graduate Conservation Fellow, started at the museum in October. She comes to us most recently from the National Museum of the American Indian, where she spent the last two years working in the conservation lab in Washington D.C. Working on a variety of projects, she completed research on Yup'ik fur parkas, consulting with Yup'ik skin sewers and attending the salmon skin residency in Anchorage last December. Prior to her work at NMAI, she has worked at the Historic Royal Palaces (UK), National Museums of Scotland, and Metropolitan Museum of Art. She obtained her graduate degree in textiles conservation from the University of Southampton.

"She will lead the museum beyond its recent expansion to position it as a key cultural institution in the Circumpolar North..."

Sarah Owens and Maria McWilliams



Drabek Assumes Leadership of Alutiiq Museum

Amy Steffian, Alutiiq Museum

When Alisha Drabek was a child growing up in Kodiak, Alutiiq traditions were hidden and poorly understood by most. People didn't speak the Alutiiq language openly or celebrate Native heritage in public ways.

"Alutiiq history and worldview were not taught at all when I was in school here. In fact, the subtle prejudices against our people simmered under the surface. It wasn't until I left for college in 1990 that I was able to grow my knowledge about the Alutiiq people and our place in the world. My true deeper access to this knowledge came upon my return as an adult, as I have spent time with our Elders."

As an adult, Drabek hopes to change the experiences of younger generations.

"One day Kodiak youth will grow up immersed in Alutiiq traditions and values, and never be made to feel shame about being Native or kept from embracing their cultural identity or speaking the Alutiiq language," she said.

Drabek will have her chance to continue shaping the cultural landscape of Kodiak as the Alutiiq Museum's next Executive Director.

The Alutiiq Heritage Foundation selected Drabek to fill the leadership position, following the resignation of Sven Haakanson, Jr. in June. Drabek began work in August, although she has a long history of partnership with the organization. As an intern with the Kodiak Area Native Association, Drabek helped to

organize construction paperwork from the museum project. More recently, she has produced language learning materials, designed and edited publications, served on the museum's collections advisory committee, and participated in long range planning.

Through her work with the collections committee, Drabek recognizes "the incredible responsibility that the museum has for the care, stewardship, and sharing of Alutiiq cultural resources in partnerships with Kodiak Alutiiq tribes and Native Corporations, and other museums."

A Kodiak resident and Alutiiq tribal member, Drabek brings a host of skills to the museum. In 2012, she earned her doctorate in Indigenous Studies from the University of Alaska, with a focus on education and Indigenous Knowledge Systems. She is well known for her work with the Alutiiq language, which she learned as an apprentice to Elder Phyllis Peterson and many other Kodiak Elders. She is also an accomplished grant writer, college professor, graphic designer, and an award-winning writer. A children's book that she co-authored, *The Red Cedar of Afognak: A Driftwood Journey*, won an American Book Award from the Before Columbus Foundation.

"Being able to strengthen community connections and wellness are what most excite me," said Drabek. "Whether this comes from fostering Alutiiq language usage, culturally relevant education in our schools, increased access to cultural knowledge, or sharing our heritage with the world to improve cross-cultural communication, I want to continue the progress we have made in these areas as a community."

TYHS Preserves Alaskan Voices

Elizabeth Cook

Tanana Yukon Historical Society is pleased that its early efforts to capture and preserve the voices of Alaskans are being recognized and made available to the public. Our first "lecture" of the 2013-2014 season *The Alaska and Polar Regions Collections & Archives* was hosted by TYHS on October 16 at the Rasmuson Library with presenter Leslie McCartney, Curator of Oral History and featuring **Pioneer Voices from the Tanana Yukon Historical Society's Audio Collection**.

When the TYHS was founded in 1958, its primary goal was to capture the experiences of territorial pioneers. To that end, many early meetings of the Society were devoted to interviews of local residents. These interviews were captured on tape, and - ultimately - found a home in the University's Oral History Archives.

More than 300 of these recordings exist; many are unique. For this presentation, Oral Historian McCartney selected the following: 1961 Harrie Hughes (on the formation of TYHS), 1959 Admiral Donald Baxter McMillan (about Polar travel), 1970 TYHS roundtable on history of local street names, 1974 Louis Black (bear story), 1974 Mattie Gilbertson Leckwold (about her dog team mail route), 1974 Noel Wien (early flight in bad weather), and 1974 Glenn Burrell (Interior Alaska history).

These recordings are just a very small sample of the larger archive. Staff of the Oral History program continue to work on making more of the collection available to the public.

A “Pope-Mobile” Returns to Fairbanks

Nancy DeWitt

The Fountainhead Antique Auto Museum turned more than a few heads when it took its shiny 1906 Pope-Toledo automobile out for a drive along the streets of Fairbanks in September. Nearly identical to the first car in Fairbanks, the museum spent several years trying to find one for their collection. It was a daunting challenge, as there are probably fewer than ten Pope-Toledos left in the world.

“A Pope-Toledo was the very first automobile in Fairbanks, arriving by sternwheeler in August of 1908,” according to museum historian Nancy DeWitt. “There were two other Pope-Toledos in Dawson City then, one of which was shipped to Fairbanks around 1909.” These big, powerful cars—which cost about seven times the yearly income of most Americans—were used to shuttle passengers to the surrounding mining camps.

“Because of their historical significance to Alaska and the far north, we’ve spent several years trying to locate a Pope-Toledo for the museum,” says DeWitt. “Discovering this one in Kentucky last year was like finding the holy grail of our most-wanted cars.” The big green car now holds a place of honor in the museum’s Alaska Gallery.

Museum manager Willy Vinton says this Type XII seven-passenger touring car is identical to the one that came to Fairbanks from Dawson, and one of only three Type XIIs known to still exist. Shortly after being unloaded from its trip up the Alaska Highway, Vinton turned the crank on the front and took the car out for a spin. It was the first time a Pope-Toledo had been seen on the streets of Fairbanks since the 1920s.

“It was a daunting challenge, as there are probably fewer than ten Pope-Toledos left in the world.”



State Archives Completes *Exxon Valdez* Oil Spill Litigation Records Project

**Larry Hibpsman, Senior Archivist
Alaska State Archives**

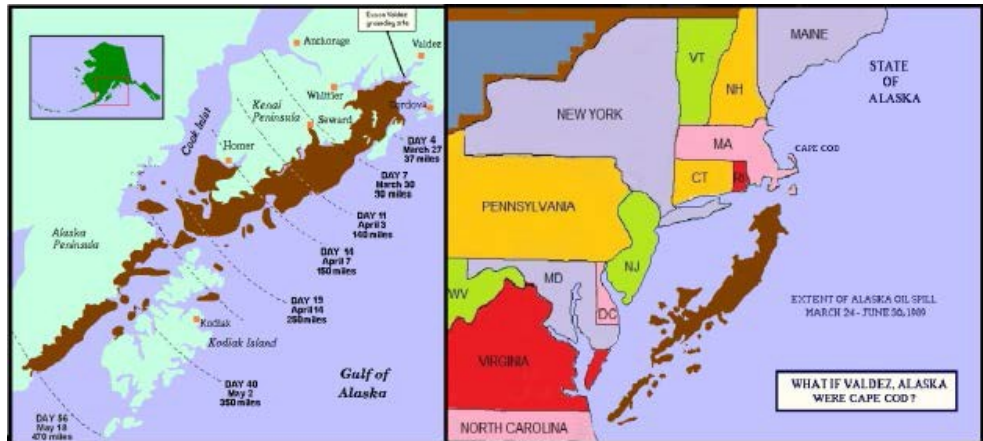
The Alaska State Archives concluded its two-year *Exxon Valdez* Litigation Records Project on September 30. The project, which appraised and organized 3,500 boxes of Alaska Department of Law *Exxon Valdez* court case records, began October 31, 2011.

The National Historical Publications and Records Commission (National Archives) provided staff salary for a project Archivist position. Three project staff appraised 3,500 boxes of records located in Juneau and about 2,600 boxes in Anchorage. They selected 918 boxes for permanent preservation in the State Archives, organized and cataloged them, and uploaded a catalog record to *WorldCat*, the world's largest online bibliographic database (<http://alaskastatelibrary.worldcat.org/>; OCLC identification number 856591471).

Project staff identified about 2,700 boxes in Juneau that do not have permanent value, and provided appraisal guidelines for both permanent and nonpermanent files still in Anchorage. In accord with the original *Exxon Valdez* civil settlement consent decree, Alaska and the United States submitted a detailed plan in 2006 for a proposed restoration project, the *Reopener for Unknown Injury*. Research to support the reopener is ongoing. Once resolved, Alaska will be able to dispose nonpermanent files in both Anchorage and Juneau, and permanent files in Anchorage will join those already in the State Archives.

The State Archives has already had reference inquiries. Two university students visited the Archives during August, and each spent several days reviewing *Exxon Valdez* records. Information gleaned will support research about news coverage and long-term impact of the spill.

Project staff made consistent efforts to reach out to the public, particularly those living in the spill region.



Staff contacted cultural agencies to offer information about the State Archives collection and to find out about Exxon-related collections in spill area communities. To aid those who may want to study the *Exxon Valdez* incident, project staff created a website (<http://archives.alaska.gov/valdezProject.html>) to help navigate the complex waters of the spill, the response and court proceedings, including:

- A 1,400 term dictionary of acronyms and other technical terminology
- A list of more than 2,500 participants
- A list of other resources and links, including those beyond the limitations of archival and cultural institutions
- A Welcome Document to help the public use the website

**What if Valdez,
Alaska were
Cape Cod?**

**Exxon Valdez Project
staff: Sara Bornstein,
Larry Hibpsman,
Wendy Sparkman**



MUSEUMS ALASKA

The Statewide Museum Association

PO Box 3004
Homer, AK 99603
907.306.3409

director@museumsalaska.org

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