annual report
2020

MUSEUMS ALASKA
STRENGTHENING MUSEUMS ACROSS ALASKA

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Dear Alaska Museum Community:

I am proud of the growth of our organization this year. At the start of 2019, the Museums Alaska Board of Directors set a new direction with a 5-year strategic plan that focuses on building our internal capacity, partnering, and advocacy. Our community is hard working, and I am excited to share the progress we have already made in such a short time.

In early 2019, the Board of Directors prioritized investing in its staff, not only through establishing its first full-time employee position and contracting with a Certified Public Accountant team for our bookkeeping, but also through leadership and fund development training for both staff and board. We have established and overhauled policies and procedures that professionalize our organization and improve the working relationship between staff and board.

The results of these internal changes can be seen through the services and partnerships we have provided:

- Through our established partnership with Rasmuson Foundation, we have been able to continue to provide the Art Acquisition Fund and Collections Management Fund grant opportunities for Alaska’s museums, with a new offering of draft review support.
- We held our 2019 Conference in Kodiak, a joint conference with the Alaska Historical Society. I’d like to thank our Kodiak community partners and Museums Alaska’s own Programs Committee for working hard to make the event a success!
- Though 2020 has had a challenging start due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Museums Alaska’s program offerings have increased. We piloted a series of webinars, thanks to funding from the Alaska State Museum’s Grant-in-Aid program. Additionally, we launched three virtual meetup offerings: Distance Networking opportunities, open Leadership Meetings, and, in partnership with the Alaska State Museum, monthly Museum Connect topical conversations.
- We were also proud to partner with the Alaska State Museum on the 2020 Alaska Museum Survey, the results of which can be found in a final report published by Gail Anderson & Associates.
- We are excited to partner with the Alaska State Museum again in the coming years on their NEH-funded Preparing Alaska’s Cultural Organizations for Emergencies project. More information about that will be shared in the coming months.

In response to COVID-19 in early 2020, we extended all memberships a 90-day grace period, and created a new Community Access option for non-members to access forums and resources on our website. Our advocacy efforts have also been strong this year. Both myself and Museums Alaska member Patty Relay attended the annual Museums Advocacy Day in Washington, D.C. earlier this year, hosted by the American Alliance of Museums. With strong contacts made through attending this event, we have been able to efficiently communicate Alaska’s museum community’s COVID-19 response needs to congress. In partnership with the Alaska State Museum, we conducted regular surveys to gauge the needs of the field, and created a Museum from Home resource page to connect our communities with our museums while isolating. This work continues as we navigate the unforeseeable uncertainty.

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to our partners, Committee members, and Board of Directors who have made all this work possible. Whenever I am asked why I do what I do, I am fortunate to respond, “I get to work with the very best people.”

It is the intention of this Annual Report to celebrate the work we all do together to serve the needs of the Alaska museum community. If you are interested in supporting this work, please consider joining us by purchasing or renewing your membership, or by making a charitable donation of any kind. And, as always, please don’t hesitate to reach out to me or any board member. We’d love to hear from you.

Sincerely,

Della Hall
Executive Director
Museums Alaska

FROM THE PRESIDENT

For Museums Alaska, 2019 was a phenomenal year of transformational growth alongside our members as we continued to come together in supporting museums across Alaska.

Over 120 of you joined our membership and have shaped our ideas, conversations and strategic partnerships. More than 185 professionals met at our annual conference in Kodiak last September. We look forward to exploring new ways of staying connected until we can all come back together to share our experiences and reflect on how resilience and innovation kept us focused on mission.

We grew internally in several areas including a shift in board leadership, consolidating our committee structure to have greater focus and impact, transitioning from a contractor to full-time staff position for the current Executive Director, Della Hall, and dove deep into state and national advocacy issues and funding. This capacity building enabled us to provide more opportunities for engagement, resources and support for you, our member network – including strategically partnering and engaging with the Museum of the North for a statewide office location in Fairbanks, and extensive online programming with the Alaska State Museum in Juneau.

It was also a year of organizational learning as we leaned into our diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) journey, aligning our values and prioritizing the budget to address these areas, issues, and people.

Our mission doesn’t change, but our programs and services evolve because we can’t do this work without you, our members. Thank you for being part of our Museums Alaska community. We look forward to future collaborations and working together to ensure all museums are seen and heard.

Sincerely,

Monica Garcia-Itchoak
Board President
Museums Alaska is committed to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility work. In June 2020, Executive Director Della Hall and Board President Monica Garcia-Itchoak shared a letter with the Alaska Museum Community asking for your feedback. Following the issue of this statement, the Museums Alaska Board of Directors prioritized the evaluation of our own policies and procedures with a DEIA lens as a necessary first step for our organization. This work is ongoing, and we will continue to update the community on our internal progress and support the community in this work, as well.

A letter was shared with the Alaska Museum Community on Thursday, June 11, 2020, available here.

The pop-up Alaska museum exhibit highlights our institutions with an important object representing the collection. The traveling exhibit, shown here at the MA Conference, includes object records from Monica Shah, Amy Steffian, and Helen Alten. It was organized by Amy Phillips-Chan and designed by ExhibitAK.
Museums Alaska is grateful for contributions of any kind. Your generosity helps support continued work on our mission to support museums and cultural centers in Alaska and to enhance public understanding of their value. Your gift will be used to support Museums Alaska’s programs. All donations to Museums Alaska are tax deductible to the extent allowable by law.

WAYS TO GIVE

GAYLORD ARCHIVAL
15% Discount
HOLLINGER METAL EDGE
20% Discount
UNIVERSITY PRODUCTS
15% Discount

Log in to your member profile at museumsalaska.org to find the discount codes!

FREE ADMISSION

Thank you to the following organizational members who have committed to providing Free Admission to Museums Alaska Members with membership card. Find your membership card in your member profile by logging in at museumsalaska.org.

- Alaska Association for Historic Preservation
- Alaska Botanical Garden, Inc.
- Alaska State Museum
- Hope Sunrise Historical and Mining Museum
- Ketchikan Museums
- Museum of the Aleutians
- Sitka Historical Society
- Talkeetna Historical Society
- Tanana-Yukon Historical Society
- Tenakee Historical Collection
- Wasilla Museum and Visitor Center

DONNA MATTHEWS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND

The Donna Matthews Professional Development Fund supports scholarships for Alaska museum professionals. Visit our giving page.

MUSEUMS ALASKA GENERAL FUND

Museums Alaska is committed to improving the services we offer year round. Please help support Museums Alaska’s core programs by donating to the General Fund today. You can make a one-time or recurring donation on our giving page.

DONNA MATTHEWS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND

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AMAZON SMILE

Amazon donates 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to the charitable organization of your choice. Visit smile.amazon.com, and select Museums Alaska.

FRED MEYER COMMUNITY REWARDS

Fred Meyer donates $2.6 million each year to charitable organizations. Visit Fred Meyer’s website to link us to your rewards card: search for us or use our non-profit number JK979.
The 2019 Award for Excellence in the Museum Field went to the City of Kodiak for supporting the Kodiak History Museum, Alutiiq Museum, and Kodiak Maritime Museum.

The 2019 Volunteer of the Year Award was awarded to Alice Ryser for her many years of service to Kodiak museums.

The 2019 President’s Award in Honor of Lifetime Achievement recognized the decades of leadership by Dr. Aldona Jonaitis, Director Emerita of the University of Alaska Museum of the North. Sunny Cook was also given the award; she served as President of McCarthy Kennicott Historical Museum.

Nominations for 2020 are open through August 31st, 2020. Descriptions and instructions for nominations are here.

Museums Alaska’s Art Acquisition Fund and Collections Management Fund programs were highlighted by Rasmuson Foundation in Philanthropy Northwest’s 2019 Trends in Northwest Giving.

2019 AWARDS

MUSEUMS ALASKA 2020 ADVOCACY

- Museums Alaska member Patty Relay and Executive Director Della Hall attended the American Alliance of Museums’ Museums Advocacy Day in Washington, D.C., February 24-25.
- Executive Director Della Hall was awarded the AAM Advocacy Leadership Award for her 2019 leadership during which Alaska’s museum advocates successfully advocated for the University of Alaska Museum of the North, the Alaska State Council on the Arts, and the Sheldon Jackson Museum, all of which were threatened by state budget cuts.
- Museums Alaska partnered with the Alaska State Museum to survey Alaska’s museums during early COVID-19 response to convey accurate information to congress in order to advocate for funding.

Museums Alaska director, Della Hall, was one of two museum professionals to receive the first Advocacy Leadership Award, presented by AAM President and CEO, Laura Lott.

GET INVOLVED
Join us for quarterly Advocacy Roundtable Conversations! Register on the Events page of our website.

REPRESENT YOUR REGION
Join the Advocacy Phone Tree to represent your region of the state and connect your colleagues to urgent calls to action

SCHOLARSHIPS

In 2019, Museums Alaska awarded the following individuals scholarships from the Donna Matthews Professional Development Fund to attend our conference and annual meeting in Kodiak. Read about each of these scholarship recipients’ experiences on our blog.

Marni Rickelmann, Ketchikan Museums
Nancy Dryden, Alpine Historical Society
Scott Shirar, University of Alaska Museum of the North
Randi Gryting, Talkeetna Historical Society
Angela Linn, University of Alaska Museum of the North
MUSEUMS ALASKA IMPACT

Launched Pilot Webinar program (with support from the Alaska State Museum's Grant-in-Aid program)

Conducted a 2020 Alaska Museum survey in partnership with the Alaska State Museum

Provided distance networking opportunities:
- quarterly Advocacy Roundtable Discussions
- monthly Leadership Meetings
- monthly Distance Networking Events

Total awarded in CMF grants (2019):
$108,918

Total awarded in AAF grants (2019):
$212,970

#akmuseums #akmuseumweek #akmuseumsmatter
Hosted second annual Alaska Museum Week, first week of June

Board giving = 100%

We are:
81 individual members &
39 organizational members

Launched monthly Museum Connect in partnership with ASM

Co-hosted annual conference with
185 attendees
3 workshops
16 sessions
13 networking opportunities

#akmuseums #akmuseumweek #akmuseumsmatter
Thank you to our donors, sponsors, partners, and funders!

Sarah Asper-Smith  
Bethany Buckingham Follett  
Rita Butteri  
Annie Calkins  
Rosemary Carlton  
Hayley Chambers

Wanda Chin and Terry Dickey  
Molly Conley  
Friends of the University of Alaska Museum of the North

Leslie Glasgow  
Terry Gyrting  
Sarah Harrington

Friends of the Alaska State Library, Archives & Museum  
Monica Garcia-Itchoak  

Ron Inouye  
Cynthia Jones  
Bryce Klug  
Marilyn Knapp  
Emily Koehler-Platten  
Amanda Lancaster

Darian LaTocha  
Heather McClain  
Selena Ortega-Chiolero  
Amy Phillips-Chan  
Samantha Reynolds  
Amy Steffian

Members at varying levels receive:

- MuseumsAlaska.org member profile to login for exclusive Members Only content, including: Resources, Discount Program, Forums, Directory, Newsletter archive
- Inclusion on our email and mailing list
- Free admission at participating museums with your membership card
- Member discounted rate for the Museums Alaska conferences
- 1 voting right
- Eligibility for travel scholarships to attend the Museums Alaska conferences
- Museums Alaska store gift
- Thank you on our website homepage
- Free grant review
- Free job listings

JOIN MUSEUMS ALASKA TO SUPPORT OUR MISSION: STRENGTHENING ALASKA’S MUSEUMS.

Christine Smith  
Ann Stegina  
Kailee Van Zile  
Céline Wachsmuth  
Alice Watterson  
Teressa Williams  
Elana Yanusz

JOIN OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP TODAY

INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERS

- Alaska Association for Historic Preservation  
- Alaska Botanical Garden, Inc.  
- Alaska State Museum  
- Alaska Veterans Museum  
- Alpine Historical Society  
- Alutiiq Heritage Foundation/Alutiiq Museum  
- American Bald Eagle Foundation  
- Anchorage Museum  
- Aunt Claudia’s Dolls, a Museum  
- Clausen Memorial Museum  
- Cooper Landing Historical Society and Museum  
- Eagle Historical Society and Museums  
- Haines Sheldon Museum  
- Hope and Sunrise Historical Society  
- Hope and Sunrise Historical and Mining Museum  
- Ilanka Cultural Center  
- Juneau-Douglas City Museum  
- Ketchikan Museums  
- Kodiak Maritime Museum  
- MAG-i Consulting  
- McCarthy-Kennicott Historical Museum  
- Museum of the Aleutians  
- Palmer Museum of History and Art  
- Pioneer Air Museum  
- Pratt Museum  
- Resurrection Bay Historical Society  
- Sealaska Heritage Institute  
- Seward Community Library & Museum  
- Sitka Historical Society  
- Skagway Museum  
- Talkeetna Historical Society  
- Tanana-Yukon Historical Society  
- Tenakee Historical Collection  
- The Alaska Humanities Forum  
- UA Museum of the North  
- Valdez Museum & Historical Archive Association  
- Wasilla Museum and Visitor Center  
- Wasilla-Knik Historical Society  
- Whittier Museum Association  
- Wrangell Museum

STUDENT

Sophie Lager  
Dehrich Schmidt-Chya

MUSE

- Karl Gurcke  
- Donna Matthews

PATRON

- Robert Banghart  
- Heatheg Beggs  
- Jennifer Gibbins  
- Sarah Harrington  
- Cynthia Jones  
- Josephine Pegues  
- Amy Phillips-Chan  
- Amy Steffian

AFFILIATE

- Rosemary Carlton  
- Lisa Elliana

Andrew Karmun  
Marilyn Knapp  
Sarah Owens  
Sara Piasecki  
Monica Shah  
Rebecca Sherman-Luce  
Tanya Wongittilin

Rachelle Bonnett  
Savanna Bradley  
Marina Briggs  
Bethany Buckingham Follett  
Christine Carpenter  
Ellen Carriere  
Hayley Chambers  
Patricia Cheshbro  
Molly Conley  
Elizabeth Jane Cook  
Nancy Dryden  
Patience Frederiksen  
Andrew Goldstein  
Anjuli Grantham  
Margaret Greuter  
Randi Gyrting  
Michael Hawfield  
Sara Hay  
Julie Herold  
Kelly Hurton  
Sherry Jackson  
Valerie Kingsland  
Amanda Lancaster  
Tracy Laqua  
Darian LaTocha  
Julia Laws  
Marlise Lee  
Angela Linn  
Kelsey Lutz  
Heather McClain  
Sue McHenry  
Elissa Meyers  
Katie Myers  
Patricia Neal  
Ed Neckar  
Sue Neckar  
Janet Northey  
Michael O’Meara  
Selena Ortega-Chiolero  
Alex Painter  
Patricia Partnow  
Nicole Peters  
Desiree Ramirez  
Marni Rickelmann  
Cathy Sherman  
Scott Shirar

STRENGTHENING MUSEUMS ACROSS ALASKA
Join the Programs Committee to help plan the 2021 conference. Check out the descriptions on the committee page of our website.

2020 MUSEUMS ALASKA ANNUAL MEETING
Friday, September 25th, 12:00 pm
Zoom virtual meeting
You’re invited to attend Museums Alaska’s 2020 Annual Meeting, this year being hosted for the first time on Zoom - our first virtual meeting! Join us to hear reports from Museums Alaska’s past year, and learn the results of the 2020 Board of Directors Election. All members welcome.

RSVP by registering here. Registrants will be sent the agenda and last year’s minutes and the link to join the Zoom meeting.

UPCOMING EVENTS

VOTE FOR YOUR NEXT BOARD REPRESENTATIVES
Voting begins Wednesday, August 26th. Vote here!

2021 CONFERENCE
September | Valdez
Join the Programs Committee to help plan the 2021 conference. Check out the descriptions on the committee page of our website.

Our 2nd Annual Museum Week highlighted the works we do behind the scenes, even during the pandemic. Watch for the next Alaska Museum Week, the first week of June. Above, Anita Maxwell from the Tongass Historical Museum in Ketchikan demonstrates the static caused by plexi barriers.