

ALASKA DIVISION OF LIBRARIES, ARCHIVES & MUSEUMS



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PO Box 110571  
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SLAM Project Moves Forward

SLAM, a moniker for the proposed State Library, Archives and Museum building, has been a dream of our division for many years and we are excited about recent progress. The varied and valuable collections of the division — museum artifacts, archival records, personal papers and manuscripts from the historical collection, books



Bruce Kato, former Chief Curator, talks with the SLAM advisory committee.

and more — will come together in a purpose-built, environmentally controlled and accessible new building. Why? These collections document the history of Alaska. Currently they are in aging, crowded, and environmentally-challenged buildings wherein they are demonstrably endangered. Consider the August 2009 Archives flood as an instance of this endangerment (see article on page 3).

The mission of the Division of Libraries, Archives and Museums (LAM) is to collect, protect and share the treasures of Alaska. In a new and improved building, this mission can be much more effectively carried out. We will have room for safe storage of collections, we will have environmental and

other safety controls, and we will share our collections statewide through the Internet as well as through beautiful on-site exhibitions.

In 2009, a Statewide SLAM Advisory Committee was established which assisted the division in a three-day visioning session with nationally respected museum, library and archives professionals. We considered how division programs and services would look in a combined facility. This visioning session was followed by months of committee work to consider details about the new programming ideas.

As an additional bonus in 2009, Bill Corbus donated to us a small parcel of land adjacent to the State Museum.

This donation enables us to utilize our property to the fullest extent. In November 2009, Kim Mahoney, DOTPF project manager, prepared an RFP (Request for Proposals) for architectural design services and put it out for bid. We expect to have a firm on contract by spring of 2010.

Next steps? First, LAM and the chosen design firm

will spend about 18 months completing architectural design. Gathering ideas at meetings and in committees will be very important. Employees of LAM will have more chances to share what they see as important. As we continue, we have sought, and will continue to seek, important ideas from interested museums, libraries and archives in Alaska; we will also use the auspices of the Statewide SLAM Advisory Committee to gather input. Finally, the next major hurdle is to obtain construction funding.

Stay tuned for more information as we go forward with this exciting project. Have questions, concerns, or ideas? Email [Linda.Thibodeau@alaska.gov](mailto:Linda.Thibodeau@alaska.gov) or call 465-2911.

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## Information Services Reaches Statewide

From its physical home in Juneau, the Information Services section of the Alaska State Library reaches statewide in service to state employees and to the people of Alaska. We stretched further than ever in 2009 with interlibrary loans, blogs, webinars, and electronic books delivered to the far corners of the state.

During 2009, the staff of Information Services used their knowledge and skills to help frustrated state employees locate work-related articles. Thanks to our interlibrary loan service, we successfully provided needed articles over 1,700 times. Using journal databases offered by the State Library and managed by Information Services, even more state employees across Alaska were able to help themselves, and did so over 64,000 times.

In an effort to share and reuse our research on reference questions, the Information Services section maintains a blog at [askasl.blogspot.com](http://askasl.blogspot.com) called "Since You Asked," which also serves as our Alaska FAQ. In 2009, 10,182

people visited "Since You Asked" to learn how to establish Alaska residency, how to acquire land in Alaska, where to look for the history of alcohol abuse in Alaska, and much more.

For several years Information Services has offered in-person classes to state employees and the public about resources available at the State Library and through their desktop. In 2009, we expanded our classes through the Internet and taught 12 webinars. See [library.state.ak.us/is/info\\_services\\_training.html](http://library.state.ak.us/is/info_services_training.html) for upcoming classes as well as for links to archived classes.

Finally, Information Services has worked with other Juneau libraries to offer a collection of 41,000 electronic books through ebrary. These books are available to all state employees regardless of location, and they vary from proofreading guides to computer books to complex treatises in science and public policy. We have received positive feedback about this resource and expect the use of this collection to take off in 2010.



## Micrographics Receives New Equipment

The State Archives has, through its Micrographics section, delivered high-quality microform products for permanent retention for state government. Micrographics is in the process of implementing strategies and upgrading equipment to continue to meet the needs of state government in the rapidly-changing world of technology.

We have acquired a Kodak I750 Scanner, which scans paper documents and creates a digital file, which can then be written to a DVD. The files are then sent to another new machine called the Archive Writer. The Archive Writer converts the files to microfilm.

Documents in digital format, like a PDF, are easier to access and retrieve than are paper and microfilmed documents. The new scanner and writer will make digital access and retrieval possible while still maintaining the archival storage capacity of microfilm.

## Museum Grant Places Interns Across Alaska



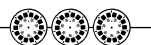
Eagle: Sara Schuyler, from the Cooperstown (New York) graduate program in museum studies, assisted the Eagle Historical Society and Museum with entering their catalog records into their PastPerfect database. Photo: Sara Schuyler

Museum studies students are full of knowledge, time, and energy, which Alaska's small museums, valiantly held aloft by an army of volunteers, can tap into to complete projects too daunting to tackle on their own. A grant program run by the Alaska State Museum does just that – placing museum studies graduate students into Alaskan museums and cultural centers, thus giving students the real-life experience they need and museum staff across Alaska the opportunity to better their institution.

2009 was the second year of a three-year pilot program funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Sciences and, like the year before, the program was a huge success. Comments from both the host museums and the interns are overwhelmingly positive. Collections were cataloged, new exhibit displays were created, and collections care work was performed on precious artifacts throughout the

state. The program was so successful that several organizations came up with their own funding to host their own intern out of the applicant pool. Two former interns have even returned to the state to take paid positions in their field, further proof that the program is achieving its goal of increasing museum knowledge in Alaska.

Our future plans will place another group of interns in museums around the state in 2010. We have also expanded the intern program into our popular Grant-in-Aid program. Along with applying for grants to fund large projects, Alaskan museums can apply for Grant-in-Aid funds to bring an intern to their community. With such a positive, win-win situation, we expect the internship program to extend beyond the three-year pilot program, providing Alaskan museums with a wealth of expertise and allowing museum studies students to experience our exceptional museum community.



## Archives Rescue Corps

Alaska is a young state rich in historical treasures. Records of people and events that make our state unique—Native cultures, Russian-America, oil development, the Gold Rush—have been collected by individuals and community organizations like churches and clubs as well as by formal archives. Many archives in Alaska are housed in excellent conditions; others are endangered by a host of factors: dirt, floods, insects, theft, light, acidic paper, poor storage or handling and more. In response to this need, the Division of Libraries, Archives and Museums created the Archives Rescue Corps; its mission is to help preserve archival records within their home communities.

The Archives Rescue Corps (ARC) was started with a Connecting to Collections grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services. ARC's initial project was to create a knowledge bank about archival materials around the state—their condition and the knowledge of their caretakers to preserve these records. Help came from a grassroots volunteer network whose goal was the identification and preservation of Alaska's treasured collections. The next step is to offer training and technical support to caretakers of collections.

In the last year, ARC has met, and even exceeded, its original goals. Twenty dedicated volunteers sought out organizations that had archives in their part of the state. The number of known archives jumped from 29 to over 100 and it's growing every day. The owners of these archives answered a short survey to assess the condition of their collections and the extent of their preservation knowledge. Based on this information, we can offer advice and support to these newly found archives. In the summer of 2009, three seminars on photograph preservation were given. ARC coordinator Frances Field, photographic preservationist Jennifer McGlinchey, and museum curator Scott Carrlee presented the seminars in Juneau, Anchorage and Fairbanks.

The Division of Libraries, Archives and Museums has applied for another grant to expand the reach of ARC. If awarded, the grant will increase technical support to help even more communities keep their archives safe. An internship program will be created, and graduate-level interns will spend time in Alaskan communities, preserving archives and teaching others how to do the same. With ARC's continued support, Alaskan communities will be even better prepared to keep Alaska's past safe for future generations.

## LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT

Library Development manages state and federal grant funds, awarding grants to Alaskan libraries and groups of libraries for innovative and collaborative activities. Here are a few of the many worthy grant activities awarded in 2009.

UAA Archives received a grant for digitization and development of finding aids for the Glenn Collection of photographs and a diary. The collection is notable for its Dena'ina cultural heritage topics, natural resources information, and observations on living in and traveling through Alaskan terrain. The collection will be made available through the Alaska Digital Archives.

The Alaska Spirit of Reading project brought together students from the Anchorage, Sitka, and Matanuska-Susitna school districts to discuss a series of books by author Ben Mikaelson. Students were able to interact with the author during his visit to Alaska, or via audio- and videoconference, or by calling into The Talk of Alaska radio show.

121 staff members from five libraries attended an Interlibrary Customer Service Training session held at the UAA Consortium Library on "The Art of Giving Great Service." The training was provided by Zingerman's training staff. Zingerman's is nationally known for its exceptional customer service model.

Over 400 residents of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough participated in Mat-Su Reads to Succeed, a community winter reading program that connected parents, children, and area residents with four authors from Alaska and beyond.

## The Alaska Fur ID Project

The conservation lab at the Alaska State Museum has undertaken a project to provide an internet resource for the identification of mammal fur from nearly 50 animals commonly used in traditional Alaska Native artifacts. Correct identification can inform cultural attribution, cultural meaning, trade relationships, historical period, methods of manufacture, and authenticity of artifacts. It is also hoped that this project might prove useful to our allies in other professions such as zoo-archaeology, biology and forensics.

The advances of digital imaging for the microscope and internet technology have allowed us to make a reference set of images available to everyone, along with a compilation of observations. Graduate student Lauren Horelick from the UCLA/Getty conservation training program and volunteer Sadie Beck Ingalls worked with ASM conservator Ellen Carrlee for two months to gather samples, mount slides, study cross-sections, and make scale casts. The images, along with measurements and other observations, are being compiled on a weblog using separate postings for each animal. Most of the

raw data has now been gathered, and the website will be available early in the spring of 2010.

As the project moves along, intriguing questions have arisen: What makes a fur waterproof? What makes wolverine fur shed frost? Why is rabbit fur so sheddy? How does scale pattern influence luster? What do the furs of aquatic mammals have in common microscopically? These questions provide an excellent entry into educational programming for learners of all ages. Microscopic hair features, such as the medulla and scale patterns, are visible with microscopes that are common in most high school science classrooms.

Development of reference slide sets to complement artifacts in our Hands-On learning collection is an avenue we plan to pursue to connect this research to programs we already offer at the Alaska State Museum. In 2010, the Fur ID Project plans to explore the specialized knowledge of others who work with fur, including Native artists, furriers, trappers, taxidermists, and government agencies who manage animal resources.



Martin fur as seen through the microscope

## ARCHIVES FLOOD

# It Was an Emergency, Not a Disaster

On a Monday morning in mid-August, after a stormy Juneau weekend, Dean Dawson, Records Manager for the Alaska State Archives, arrived at the State Archives about 7:15. Watery sounds alerted him to a possible problem. Opening the door, he discovered inches of water on the delivery dock.

Thinking quickly, Dean contacted the Department of Administration's Division of General Services for help. By 8:30, Archives and General Services staffs were hurriedly removing wet boxes while the construction crew, which had been repairing the roof, plugged the leak. State Library and Museums staffs helped.

What had happened? Overnight, the temporary plastic bubble that covered the roof while repairs were underway had failed. Wind had driven the heavy downpour through an open drain directly into Archives storage areas. Over 1000 boxes were wet, map and blueprint cases were full of water, and the floor was awash. Streams of rain water poured down the two-story-tall shelves of the vaults as crews armed with vacuums and squeegees battled to keep up with the deluge.

Fortunately, the Archives' Records Emergency Planning & Response manual had been recently updated and a response program was semi-ready. The atrium of the State Office Building and the nearby Juneau Arts and Culture Center were quickly filled with rows of borrowed tables. Boxes were trucked out of the Archives as fast as possible. Amid the cacophony of fans and dehumidifiers, boxes were unpacked and soon the rooms were



Top: Water cascades out of water-logged boxes as Records Analyst Chris Hieb removes them for triage work in another location.

Bottom: Librarian Katie Fearer painstakingly interleaves blotting paper among wet pages at a triage center.



filled with orderly rows of soaked state documents, tended to by LAM staff.

Many community volunteers assisted staff in unpacking wet boxes and drying the contents. Notable among the volunteers were former LAM division directors Karen Crane and Kay Shelton, who, with many others, spent hours running hair dryers over wet documents, fluffing pages and checking them for moisture.

So many boxes were wet that the volunteers were unable to attend to all of them as fast as needed. Since mold begins to grow after 72 hours, a freezer trailer was rented and about half of the pulled boxes were frozen for several weeks. Freezing puts the material in stasis until it can be thawed and dried carefully and thoroughly.

By an extraordinary stroke of luck, the flood occurred during the annual conference of the Western Association of Art Conservators (WAAC), which was meeting in Juneau. Many conservators with specialized knowledge in the needed areas of paper preservation were eager to lend expertise to the recovery effort. They, too, volunteered many hours of drying and fluffing; added benefits included their expert research and consultation.

By the end of September, we ascertained that none of the soaked records at the Archives were lost. Some were wrinkled, some ink had run, but all were usable for future research. A potential disaster had been averted by quick thinking in early moments, by a good team effort throughout, by emergency preparedness in advance and by good luck in coinciding the WAAC conference.

# Internet Circle of Safety

The Alaska Internet Circle of Safety is a resource developed by the Alaska State Library to educate parents and keep our children safe from online predators.

Computer literacy is not optional for the next generation; it's essential. It is our responsibility, as adults, to teach children to navigate the Internet safely, efficiently, and legally. Unfortunately, the Internet is uncharted territory for many of us, so we must take time to educate ourselves first.

The Alaska Internet Circle of Safety is a resource for adults who would like to teach their children to be responsible online citizens. This project was funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and is a joint effort of the Alaska State Library and the Alaska Library Association.



This resource was designed in order that both parents and librarians could easily access current information on internet safety. The online portal was developed to direct parents to online resources and information on subjects ranging from cyber bullying to internet acronyms. The librarian section leads librarians to a toolkit of resources that support community training. Resources available include bookmarks on cyber bullying, social networking, and internet safety, as well as DVDs and booklets that can be distributed to parents at community trainings held at the library.

Information about the Alaska Internet Circle of Safety was presented to the state's librarians at the Alaska Library Association annual conference in 2009. For more information, visit [akla.org/safety](http://akla.org/safety).



## This Year in the Historical Collections

The Alaska State Library Historical Collections has experienced another year of growth in its collections and achievement in service to the Alaskan public. Here are just a few highlights from a very busy year.

Library staff processed over a hundred archival collections of photographs and manuscripts. New acquisitions, along with numerous collections processed in a backlog processing initiative, have been described, inventoried, cataloged and made available to the public.

Rose Welton has completed a much-needed project, creating MARC records for hundreds of rare and valuable items in the James Wickersham Pamphlet Collection. These early 20th-century pamphlets provide information on almost every imaginable topic related to the cultural, economic and political

development of the Alaska Territory. The Wickersham Pam collection is only a small part of the materials, including archival collections, maps, books, and government documents, which Rose catalogs for the Historical Collections. Well over two thousand items were added to the catalog this year.

The Historical Collections has made great progress in establishing an archival audio visual center for Southeast Alaska. Motion picture film and magnetic media are converted to digital formats for preservation and improved access. Audio visual materials, donated regularly to the collection, are now being described, inventoried and duplicated in a manner consistent with photograph and manuscript collections. A significant effort has been devoted this year to duplication of dozens of 16mm films borrowed for

copying from the Alaska Airlines Media Library, in addition to many films retained from the former State Film Library or donated to the collection.

The Historical Collections benefited from a summer internship with photo conservator Jennifer McGlinchey. Jennifer conducted a survey of the photographic materials, documenting current conditions in the collections, and making recommendations. The result of her work is a re-organization and re-housing of the nitrate negative collection. Thousands of sheets of volatile original film have been re-housed and moved to stable frozen storage. The effort continues the longstanding commitment of the Historical Collections to preserve the perishable and irreplaceable photographic record of Alaska and its people.

## Science On a Sphere® Comes to the Museum

Alaska State Museum went global with installation of the new Science On a Sphere® (SOS) exhibit in March 2009. SOS is hard to ignore. The huge, suspended, six-foot-diameter globe immediately grabs the attention of people entering the museum. Colorful, glowing views of Earth and the other planets draw visitors into the central gallery and urge them to linger for awhile. Animated images magically shift and change, mesmerizing viewers. Blood pressure drops, the mind clears, and visitors are stimulated to ask more questions. This is the beauty of the SOS exhibit.

SOS was created by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) as a tool for researchers to display and test their scientific models; and now it is also used as an exciting informal educational tool to help people of all ages and walks of life to better understand earth sciences. World-wide, there are over 40 of these installations, and two are situated in Juneau. The other Sphere is installed at the Ted Stevens Marine Research Institute, where it is used primarily for the original purpose of scientists viewing and manipulating their

models. Thanks to funding and technical assistance from NOAA, SOS was also installed in the Alaska State Museum. It is an ideal venue for interpretive and educational programs.

In this first year of installation, an estimated 56,000 people have seen SOS at the Alaska State Museum. During winter months, SOS is generally set on automated playlists, which cycle through

a sequence of over 300 available datasets. Automated playlists include such popular views as real-time weather and earthquakes, day and night at winter solstice, and a typical 24 hours of air traffic around the globe. Museum staff and volunteers have also conducted over 700 facilitated programs on such topics as the uniqueness of Alaska and the potential effects of climate change. Additionally, teachers have requested over 60 field trips focused on such topics as geography, geology, climate change, and astronomy for 1000 students ranging from preschool to university age.

Perhaps the greatest measure of success has been the number of people visiting the Alaska State Museum for the first time because of SOS. Many students have returned with their families after being introduced to the Sphere in a class field trip. The museum is experiencing an increase in visitation by young adults. Another great indicator of success is that a 13-year-old student was so enthused by his class visit last spring that he volunteered many of his Saturdays over the summer to give SOS presentations!



Lisa Golisek-Nankervis, Janette Lachey, and Ellen Carrlee view a dataset on the SOS.

In the coming year, SOS will continue to offer fascinating views of our place on the planet and among the stars. New datasets and movies are being released each month and NOAA has promised additional real-time datasets in the future. An orientation film is being produced to introduce summer travelers to Alaska and the museum. With Science on a Sphere, the future is bright and the effects are global!

## FAMILIAR FACES IN NEW PLACES

The Division of Libraries, Archives & Museums is pleased to promote from within when it benefits the organization. In 2009, the advantages were apparent. Nationwide searches, one for Deputy Director and another for Chief Curator, verified that the best person for the job was already at home.

Glenn Cook was serving as State Archivist for Alaska; in October, he accepted the position of Deputy Director for LAM. In November, Bob Banghart was promoted from Curator of Exhibits to the position of Chief Curator of the Alaska State Museum. Bob succeeds longtime Chief Curator Bruce Kato,

who retired in July after 30 years of service to the State of Alaska.

In just a few months, both have shown that they were very well prepared for their new jobs. Congratulations to both; we look forward to many years of excellent leadership.