

Alaska State Museums Bulletin 37

Posted on February 23, 2011 by [Alaska State Museums](#)

Contents:

A Final Report: A Summary of Paper Conservation Projects at Seven Alaskan Museums
Exhibit Tips
Ask ASM
Shaking the Money Tree
Spotlight on Grant in Aid
ASM on the Road
Alaska Museums in the News
Professional Development/Training Opportunities
Volunteer Viewpoint
Lamp Light
Alaska Museum Day Film Reminder
Book Report
Summer Intern Returns
Standard in Excellence Program (StEPs)
Professional Time Wasting on the Web

A Final Report: A Summary of Paper Conservation Projects at Seven Alaskan Museums

By Seth Irwin, Paper Conservator in private practice

[editor's note: below is a the short version of Seth's paper. The entire article can be viewed here: [Final project report.](#)]

Issues regarding the long term stabilization of institutional paper collections have always been a problem for museums and other institutions. In one context, paper, as a material, can be very resilient to many outside factors that would ordinarily cause damage to other materials such as metal and wood.

On the other hand, paper can be more fragile than any other material, resulting in a sheet of paper's complete destruction with only a slight movement of the hand or a drop of water. So much of our history as a people can be transcribed onto a single sheet of paper, and without careful thought and care, that history is gone with the loss of that sheet.

The job of a paper conservator is simple: Keep paper from becoming damaged by whatever factors or forces might contribute to its deterioration, and should a paper artifact become damaged, fix it with the highest ethical standards as possible — ethical standards such as artistic intent, documentation, and quality repair material.

Alaska is a treasure chest of history. A large portion of the state's paper collection has already found its way into the states eighty or so museums and cultural institutions, but much of it is still in private hands.

As Alaska is a young state, so is its introduction to the field of conservation. The state has no permanent conservator that is able to deal with either paintings or paper. In addition, the conservation problems associated with textiles are also considered to require a special skill set, and at present, the state has no one that is able to deal with textiles either.

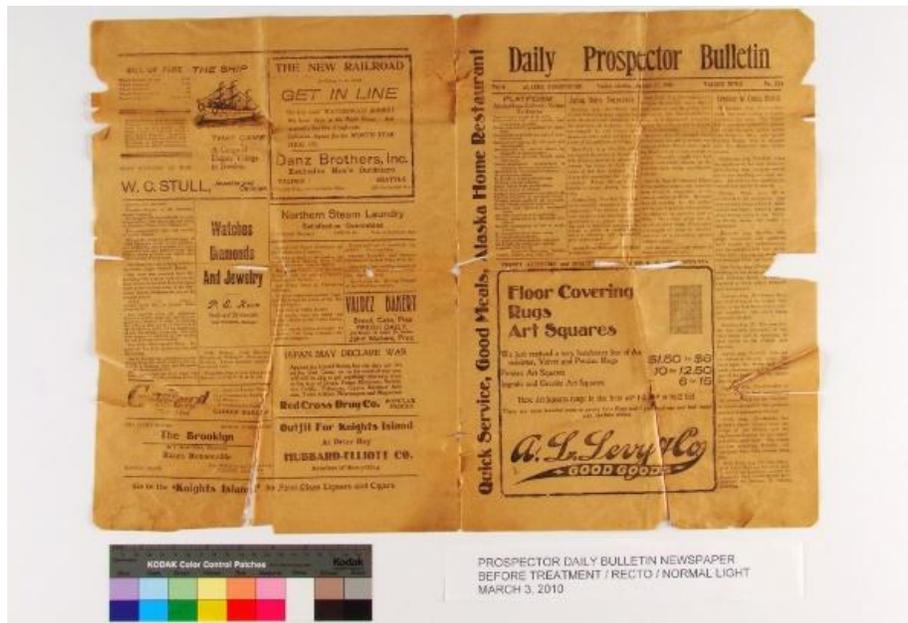
In the last few years, many of the institutions in the state have sustained serious damage to their collections due to catastrophic events such as floods, volcanic eruptions, and fires. Staff in many of the museums is limited, and most are not aware of new research or techniques in dealing with conservation dangers that might cause damage to paper.

Aware of all of these problems since arriving in Alaska many years ago, Scott Carrlee, the Curator of Museum Services and one of the object conservators with the Alaska State Museum, began to work on a long term project to deal with the expanding paper conservation issues of the state. This project would eventually bring me out to Alaska to begin the process of working with museums to improve the way in which paper artifacts are managed at many of Alaska's museums. In April of 2009, while I was still in Canada working on my master's degree, I began speaking with Scott about ideas regarding a long term plan to facilitate bringing me to Alaska to work with as many museums and institutions as possible.

At the beginning there were only a small number of institutions involved in the project, and as word began to spread, several more jumped on board. The projects were to be based on a one-month time frame for each institution.

I visited the first institution, the Valdez Museum and Historical Archive, in March 2010. As with the institutions that would follow, the first week was spent on assessment, looking through the collection, box by box, shelf by shelf, at each artifact. With only a month to work with, time was extremely valuable and no time could be wasted conducting training for techniques based on artifacts the museum did not have.

After discussion and analysis, three artifacts were designated for treatment. The first was one of the museum's oldest newspapers, dated 1907, and titled "The Prospector Daily Bulletin."



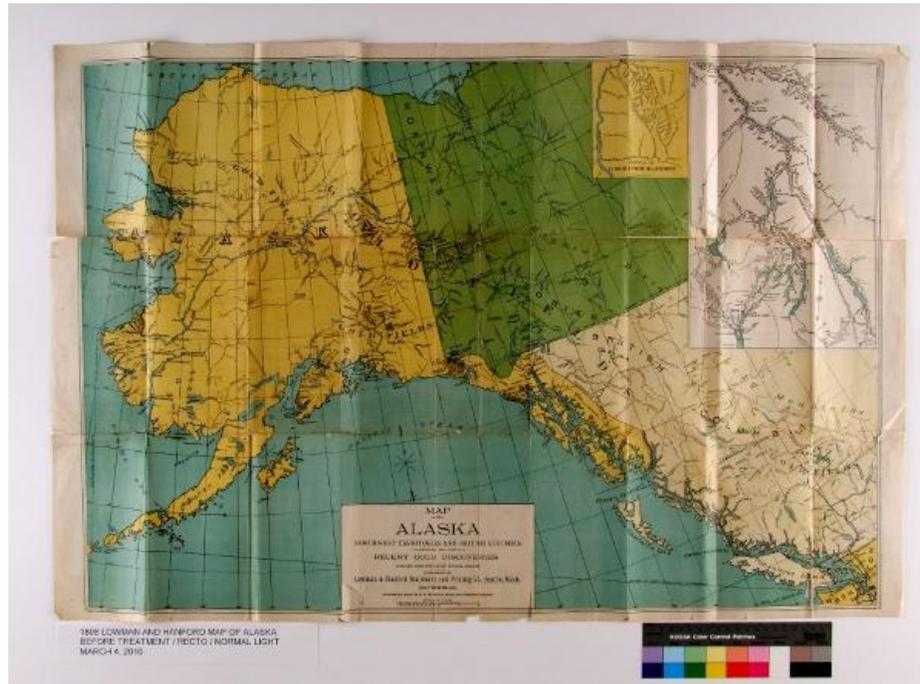
Before treatment of the Prospector Bulletin ca. 1907. Photo: Seth Irwin

The second artifact was a document that was found to be the oldest American Legion Charter in the United States, dated 1919.



Before treatment of the American Legion Charter of Valdez, ca. 1919. Photo: Seth Irwin

The third was a prospector map of Alaska dated 1898. Other artifacts requiring simpler repairs were placed aside as practice pieces for training purposes.



Before treatment of Lowman and Hanford Map of Alaska, ca. 1898. Photo: Seth Irwin

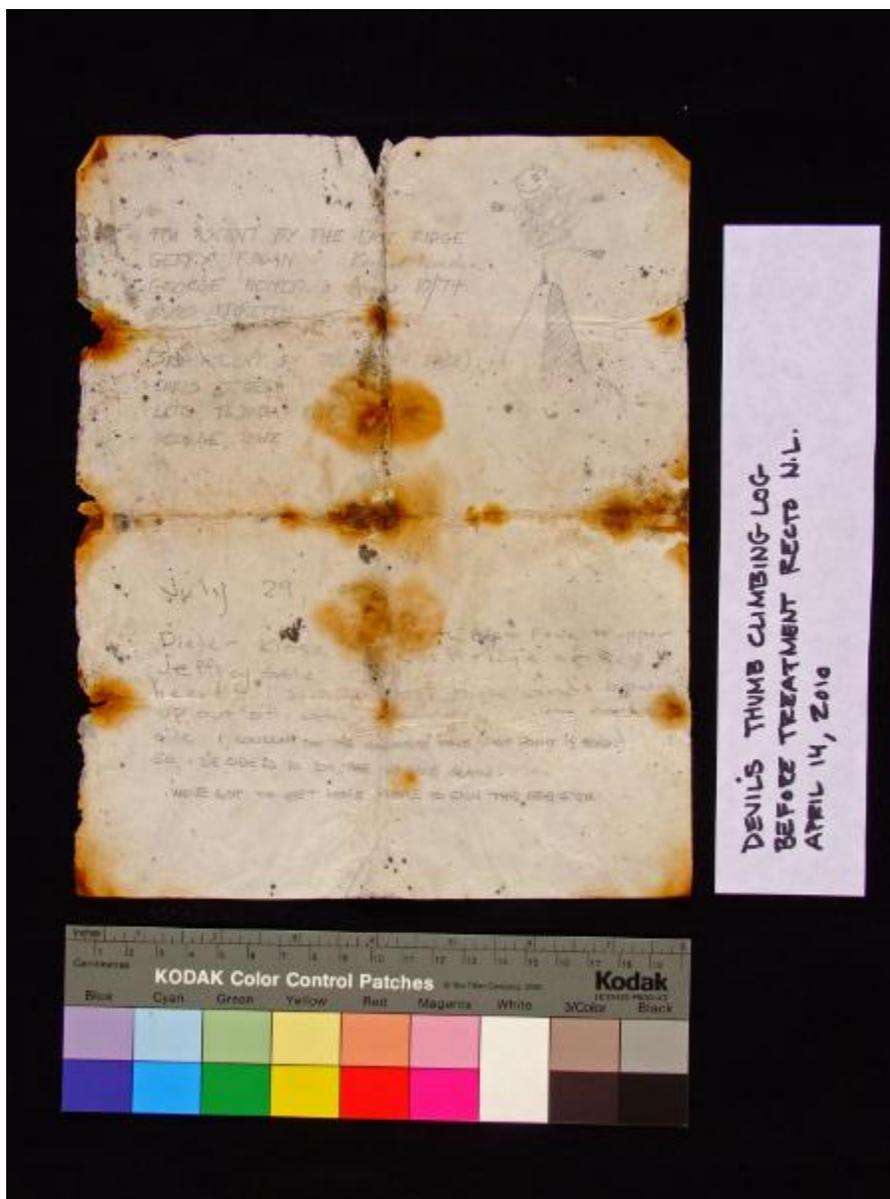
April was spent at the Clausen Memorial Museum of Petersburg. Unlike the Valdez Museum, the Clausen Museum is significantly smaller in both storage and collection size; thus allowing the assessment to progress at a much faster rate.

Treatment work for the Clausen Museum consisted of two artifacts: a panoramic photograph dated 1916,



Before treatment of the Sheelor panoramic photograph of Petersburg Harbor ca. 1916-1917. Photo: Seth Irwin

and a climbing log from Devil's Thumb, a local Canadian mountain dated 1946.



Before treatment of The Devil's Thumb climbing log ca. 1946. Photo: Seth Irwin

The history of the latter document proved to be very interesting. It had been placed on the mountain, in a metal can, when the mountain was first climbed in 1946. As people climbed the mountain over the years, the document was signed, becoming a record of every person who had climbed the mountain since 1946. It remained on the mountain for sixty-five years. Through the changing of the seasons, the metal suffered extreme corrosion, introducing a significant amount of iron corrosion into the paper. A local mountain climber realized the sheet was becoming destroyed, and brought it down from the mountain to the museum.

During the month of May, after leaving the Clausen Museum, I was asked to spend a month in Juneau to conduct treatment on several bound artifacts. These bound artifacts were composed of ledgers belonging to the Eagle Historical Society in Eagle, Alaska, and were sent to the Alaska State Museum after an ice dam broke on May 7, 2009 and flooded the town. The books were salvaged after the flood, but the result was artifacts suffering severe water damage and covered in dirt and mud.



*Before treatment of the front cover a Ledger of the town of Eagle damaged in the flood of 2009.
Photo: Seth Irwin*

Once the project was finalized, a second problem arose concerning a work space to conduct the treatments. Coincidental, the Holy Trinity Church of Juneau, which had suffered a catastrophic arson fire several years earlier, had several artifacts that were salvaged from the rubble after the fire and were of need of repair. Their space was offered for the month for treatment work and in addition to the Eagle volumes, several of the Church artifacts would be repaired as well.



Before treatment of the front cover of a Registrar of the Holy Trinity Church of Juneau damaged in the fire of 2006. Photo: Seth Irwin

The following month spent at the Anchorage Museum at Rasmuson Center had a very different set of priorities than the time spent at other institutions. Three projects were primary. The first involved developing a protocol for initiating the removal of several thousand accession labels from photographic albums in their collection.



Figure 32: Using a heated spatula to remove pressure sensitive adhesive labels from pages of photographic albums. Photo: Monica Shah

The second project involved the unrolling of approximately twenty-six panoramic photographs of mixed lengths.



Humidification and unrolling of panoramic photographs. Photo: Seth Irwin

The third project involved the treatment of a modern panoramic photograph that had suffered water damage and fused to the glass.



Before treatment of Civilian Employees 57 Fighter Wing Installation Photograph ca.1949 Photo: Seth Irwin

In addition to the treatments, and included in the grant, was the conducting of a public workshop, at the museum, on techniques of basic adhesive removal, humidification, and basic handling of paper.

The Alaska Aviation Heritage Museum of Anchorage played a significant role throughout the year long project contributing assistance in both equipment and supplies. The Aviation Museum also allowed for the completion of several outside projects by allowing the use of their facility. Such projects included the treatment of three very important 1826 watercolors from the first British expedition to Barrow.



Before treatment of three watercolors from an 1826 British Expedition to Barrow on the British Ship The Beecham. Photo: Seth Irwin

The months of August and September of 2010 were spent at institutions in the Kenai area, including the Kenai Visitor and Cultural Center, the Russian Orthodox Church of the Holy Assumption and the Kenai Historical Society. Each entity of this project had very specific priorities.



Conducting conservation training workshops at the Kenai Visitor and Cultural Center. Photo: Laura Forbes

The project at the Dorothy Page Museum of Wasilla took place during the month of October 2010. This museum, run by curator Bethany Buckingham, serves as a community repository for local history, as well as represents the history of the co-founder of the famous Iditarod Dog Sled Race, Dorothy G. Page.

Treatment priorities for the month consisted of two artifacts, a 1917 architectural drawing of the Wasilla Township, and a 1910 wall map of Central Alaska. Both the drawing and the map suffered similar damage most likely caused by previous framing.



Before treatment of Wasilla Townsite Drawing ca. 1917. Photo: Seth Irwin



Before treatment of front of Sleem's Map of Central Alaska ca.1910. Photo: Seth Irwin

Exhibit Tips

By Jackie Manning

Six months ago I started working at the Alaska State Museum as the Exhibit Specialist. Between then and now some great methods for putting up and taking down exhibits have been passed to me. Below are a few key tips that I find essential for mounting and hanging labels.

Mounting

The Alaska State Museum prints their labels on heavyweight, semi-gloss photo paper. Once printed, most labels need to be mounted onto a more rigid surface. Depending on the size and purpose of the label, we use a variety of different materials for mounting. For smaller labels (i.e. titles) we will use 4 ply matboard or 1/4" Gatorfoam®. When mounting larger labels (i.e. posters and signage) we use 1/2" Gatorfoam® or formaldehyde free MDF panel such as Arreis®.



Our most commonly used adhesive for small and midsize labels is spray adhesive 3M Super 77TM. Follow the directions on the can and use a respirator mask. Be sure to spray your labels away from where you will be trimming to avoid getting adhesive on the front of the label. Once labels are mounted, they can be trimmed using a mat knife or utility knife. Using a straight edge or a transparent drafting square, mark guidelines using a pencil to cut the mounted labels.

Be sure to keep your edges square to the text and avoid trimming the label too close to the text; allow for an adequate border for readability.



When mounting larger labels, it is helpful to start out by trimming the top edge and one side of the label to size before gluing so that you have edges to line up on the board. The other edges can then be trimmed square after the label is mounted. Using a table saw cut the Gatorfoam® or Arreis® to size before mounting.

For larger labels and signage, dry mounting with Shur-Stik® wallpaper glue allows for a more durable and permanent bond. Using a medium nap paint roller, roll the glue onto the back of the board. Carefully align the label onto the board. Once the label is mounted, burnish with a clean brayer (printmaking roller). Avoid getting glue on the surface of the label. After trimming the label, the edges can be sanded with very fine grain sandpaper.

Laminating

Another mounting technique the Alaska State Museum uses is to laminate labels. For labels that will be used in high traffic areas or designed to be handled (i.e. playing cards) we will have our labels laminated. For labels that need to be both laminated and mounted to board, we laminated the two labels together and then separate them once they have been laminated. To do this we take two labels of the same size and using double-stick tape on just the front end that will go through the laminator first, attach the two labels back to back. Make sure the labels have been

printed with at least a 1/4" border. Once the labels have been laminated, trim off the border with a utility blade and separate them. Now that they have been laminated on the front side, the back can be mounted as needed.



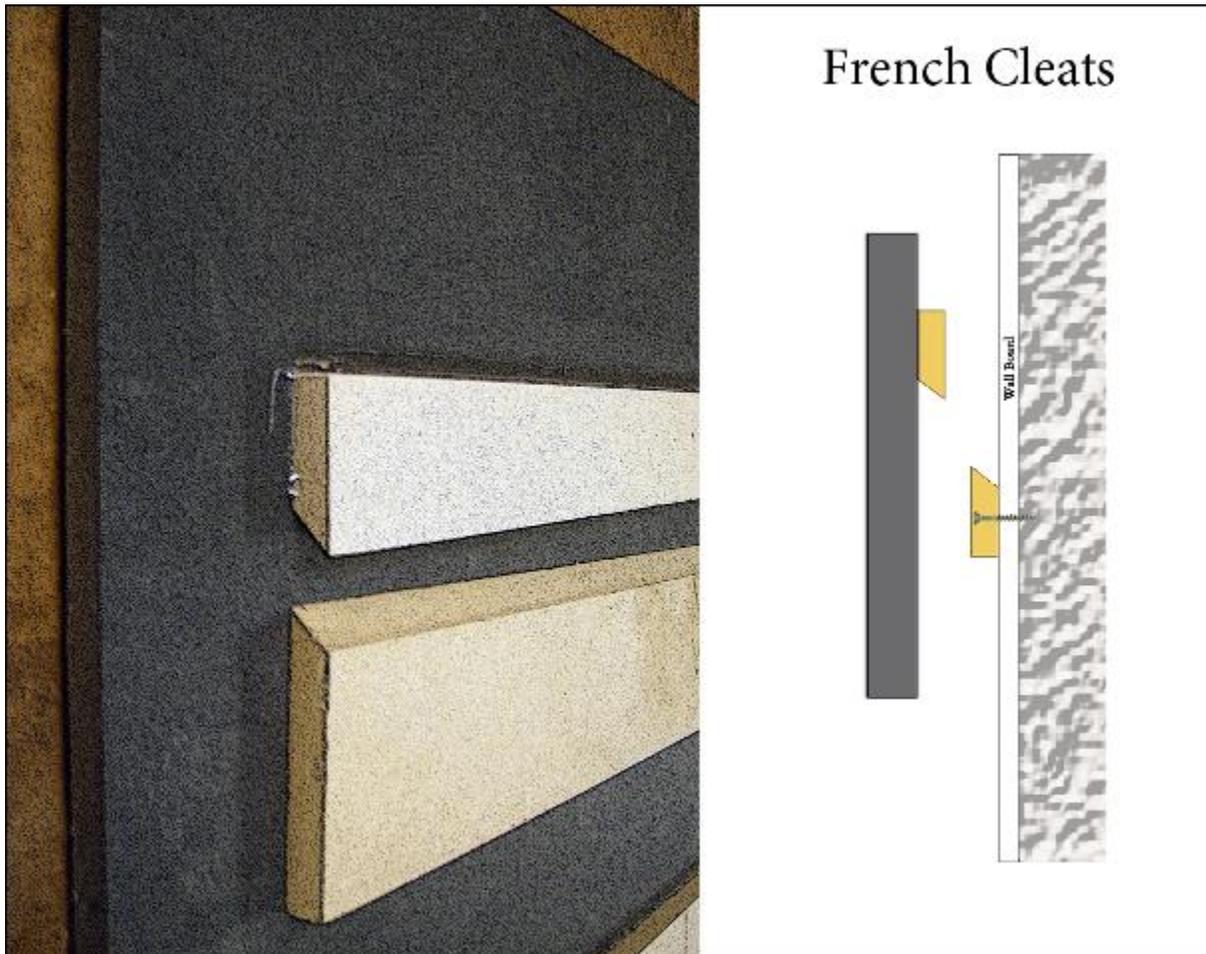
For our recent Great Alaska Game Show exhibit we laminated our board games and mounted them on Arreis® board.



Hangings

To hang smaller labels, we use double-sided foam tape. The double-sided foam tape should be cut into small pieces for smaller labels and larger pieces for mid size labels. Double-sided foam tape should be used carefully because it can be difficult to remove. Avoid using on wallpaper or finishes that might peel up when removing the tape.

For hanging larger labels, a French Cleat is commonly used. These can be made from either ½” Gatorfoam® or ½” Arreis® that is two or three inches wide. Cut off a section of this board, long enough to go across the top back of the label, and cut a corresponding length to go on the wall. Both pieces should have one long side bevel cut at a 45° angle along the length of one edge. One piece is glued to the upper back side of the label, bevel down, facing in toward the back of the label. The other piece is attached to the wall, bevel up, facing into the wall. Make sure both strips are level. The back of the label will then slide down to hook onto the beveled strip attached to the wall, holding the label firmly in place. This type of mount allows the label to be easily removed or adjusted side-to-side.



For more information on creating and mounting labels view the following website:

<http://museumbulletin.files.wordpress.com/2011/01/bulletin-7-8.pdf>

Ask ASM

Question: I want to display artifacts in a setting where it looks as though the tool maker/user has just set them down. Strange metal appendages really yank visitors out of the world you are trying to create for them! I am working with the following objects: net sinkers, boulder spalls and scrapers. I believe they are all made of slate (metamorphic) which has a rather smooth/hard surface. I have e-mailed the archaeologist to confirm this. They will be on exhibit for 5-6 weeks. The deck is slanted and smooth, so I just need something to keep them from sliding down in the event of a quake etc. How about the white museum putty?

ASM: Since it is only a short duration, there are more options. The white museum putty would work but I never like putting that stuff directly on an object. It still can stain almost anything but glass. You can try putting a piece of that blue 3M painters tape on the back of the object and then put the putty on the tape. The tape will protect the object and since it is less than two months in duration, you should be able to take the tape off without much of a problem. If you have time before you have to start mounting, find similar materials that are not accessioned museum objects (slate from outside or education/gift shop/personal material etc.) and try the method outlined above. See if the tape comes off without pulling off the surface material. See if the oil from the putty gets through the tape. See what kinds of tabbing you need to make with the tape to make sure it comes off smoothly etc. See how much putty you need for the angle of your slant board. By experimenting around you should be able to come up with a system that works well enough.

Shaking the Money Tree

Grants Grants and More Grants!

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

DIVISION OF PRESERVATION AND ACCESS

The National Endowment for the Humanities' Division of Preservation and Access has offered Preservation Assistance Grants for Smaller Institutions for more than a decade. These grants help small and mid-sized cultural heritage institutions such as libraries, museums, historical societies, archival repositories, town and county records offices, and colleges and universities improve their ability to preserve and care for their humanities collections. Awards of up to \$6000 support preservation related collection assessments, consultations, training and workshops, and institutional and collaborative disaster and emergency planning. Preservation Assistance Grants also support education and training in best practices for sustaining digital collections, standards for digital preservation, and the care and handling of collections during digitization. Institutions may request funds for a preservation assessment of digital collections. NEH does not fund digitization or the development of digital programs in this grant category.

All applications to the NEH must be submitted through Grants.gov. See the application guidelines for details.

The 2011 guidelines for Preservation Assistance Grants for Smaller Institutions are available at <http://www.neh.gov/grants/guidelines/pag.html>. You will also find sample project descriptions, sample narratives, and a list of frequently asked questions. The deadline for applications is May 3, 2011.

Small and mid-sized institutions that have never received an NEH grant and those considering projects in digital preservation are especially encouraged to apply.

For more information, contact the staff of NEH's Division of Preservation and Access at 202-606-8570 and preservation@neh.gov

Institute for Museums and Library Services

IMLS is the premier federal funding agency for libraries and museums. Some of the upcoming grant deadlines are:

March 15, 2011: 21st Century Museum Professionals

April 1, 2011: Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services Program

May 21, 2011: Save America's Treasures

It takes a long time to write one of these grants so if you are interested, start now.

For more information about IMLS granting programs click here

<http://www.ims.gov/applicants/name.shtm>

IMLS ANNOUNCES SAVE AMERICA'S TREASURES GRANT AWARDS

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) has awarded nine Save America's Treasures Grants. Save America's Treasures makes critical investments in the preservation of our nation's most significant and endangered cultural treasures, which illustrate, interpret, and embody the great events, ideas, and individuals that contribute to America's history and culture. Grants are awarded to federal, state, local, and tribal government entities and non-profit organizations through a competitive matching-grant program, administered by the National Park Service in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), IMLS, and the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities (PCAH). For more information about the 2011 Save America's Treasures grants, <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/treasures/index.htm>. Additional information on the Save America's Treasures program can be found on the PCAH Web site at www.pcah.gov, the NPS Web site at <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/treasures/>.

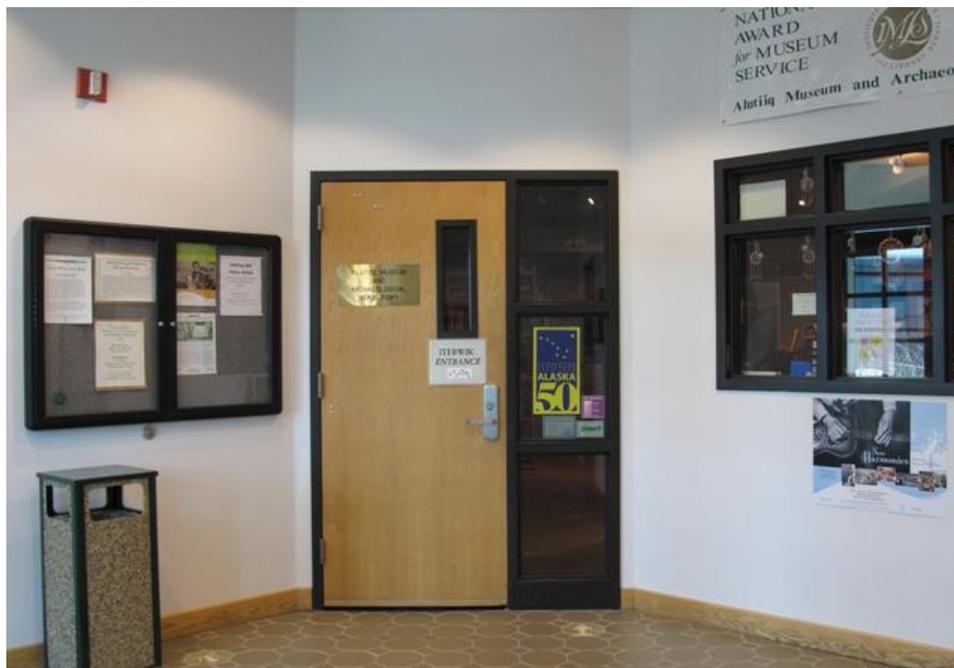
Spotlight on Grant in Aid

The Alutiiq Museum and Archaeological Repository was one of the recipients of FY2010 Grant-In-Aid funding. They were awarded \$7,541 for an exhibit renovation project entitled “Introducing the Alutiiq”. The project included several components: an update of the museum’s main entrance, visitor greeting procedures, improvements to their introductory exhibits, a printed visitor handout, and a children’s display. These improvements were designed to enhance visitor experiences, exhibit accessibility and to better share the museum’s core educational messages.

The Alutiiq Museum is located within the Alutiiq Center of Kodiak. Through the Alutiiq Museum, the Alutiiq Heritage Foundation seeks to create a community where Alutiiq culture and heritage are celebrated in daily life. To that end, the Museum’s mission is to not only preserve the Alutiiq traditions, but also to share and promote awareness of the culture of indigenous people’s throughout the Gulf of Alaska region.

The “Introducing the Alutiiq” project was planned with the assistance of a community advisory committee, local artists and educators. These display improvements are phase one of their new Museum Interpretive Plan developed from the combined results of an extensive visitor survey, a 2008 performance management survey, and from a 2006 MAP III survey. The recommendations revealed the need for a cohesive and comprehensive exhibit design and called for the addition of hands-on materials and media to enhance displays, provide age appropriate opportunities for different levels of exploration, and address a variety of learning styles.

The first component of the project provided a graphic enhancement of the facility’s entrance in order to make it visually more appealing and welcoming, while providing an introduction to visitors with displays and information.



A large wall adjacent to the museum's entrance door was painted a striking ochre red with a contrasting black graphic of Alutiiq symbolism. Entry into the museum will be guided by a large sign with the museum's name and two smaller signs providing other basic information such as hours and admission fees. The entry was redesigned to eliminate confusion and signal the beginning of a journey into the Alutiiq world. Entering the museum, visitors are now provided a printed brochure featuring the museum's logo, Alutiiq language greetings, an introductory statement about the Alutiiq people and, on the reverse, a gallery map with major attractions noted.



The next component included redesigning the interior entrance to visually differentiate the museum store from the introductory entrance to the gallery. This area already features the existing "Cultures through Time" artifact exhibit tracking 7,500 years of Alutiiq culture. Through this project, three additional introductory displays were designed to clearly convey two key interpretive messages—that the Alutiiq are a maritime people and that they have a vibrant living culture. A wall mural of a coastal Alutiiq village was installed including cut-outs of contemporary Alutiiq people standing on a simulated beach leading the way into the gallery. The display also features audio of ocean waves and a bi-lingual welcoming message. The opposite wall is now adorned with a new Alutiiq language display featuring cultural maps demonstrating the distribution of Native languages, cultural identity and tribal relationships in the region. Photos documenting their Alutiiq language preservation efforts and audio enhancement were also included. The Alutiiq language components and audio features were reviewed by a

language advisory committee. Another committee advised the development of the children's corner (*Wamwik*). The *Wamwik* is an interactive children's play area modeled after an Alutiiq house, complete with Alutiiq clothing and toys.

Visitor surveys after completion of "Introducing the Alutiiq" report that the finished project has made a huge difference in the impression visitors get from their museum experience, particularly from the inclusion of Alutiiq language elements. The *Wamwik* has been a great success and has created a dramatic increase in visitation by local families and youth.

ASM on the Road:

Scott Carrlee, Curator of Museum Services spent a week working in Fairbanks on two different projects up in the "Frozen North" (only it was not all that frozen, reaching a balmy 15 F almost every day). The first project was to safely remove and crate for storage 15 Rusty Heurlin paintings from the Stampede Theater. These paintings, which belong to the Pioneer Museum, depict the Gold Rush Stampede and the founding of the city of Fairbanks as part of a narrated theater show. The Theater room is scheduled for renovation and asbestos abatement. There was concern that the paintings might have some asbestos laden dust on them so all the necessary precautions were taken. Fortunately Scott happens to be licensed to abate asbestos so this project was a perfect match.



Scott Carrlee cleaning one of the Rusty Heurlin paintings. Photo By Kelly Cannon of Nortech Engineering

The other project was a museum assessment at the Pioneer Air Museum also located in Pioneer Park. The museum has been in existence since the early 1990s and is filled to the brim with important aviation equipment and memorabilia. Scott spent two days working with Pete Haggland, the museum manager, on important ways to improve museum operations. The goal of the assessment is to provide a roadmap to better collections care and ways to improve mission, vision and governance. The assessment is based on the national museum standards as outlined in the Standards and Excellence Program (StEPs) of the American Association of State and Local History.



Pioneer Air Museum Fairbanks

Alaska Museums in the News

Here are links to news articles and radio newscasts about happenings at museums around the state:

[Simon Paneak Memorial Museum reopens in Anaktuvuk Pass](#)

Published in the Fairbanks Daily Newsminer, 10/27/10

“On July 13, 2010 the community residents of Anaktuvuk Pass, North Slope Borough Mayor Edward Itta and department officials, and many guests helped celebrate the open house of the newly renovated and expanded Simon Paneak Memorial Museum.”

[An inspiring discovery at the Alaska Heritage Museum](#)

Posted on the Wells Fargo blog site, 09/20/10

“While moving an object from a banker’s office in the Wells Fargo building in Anchorage back to the Alaska Heritage Museum, Jennifer McCarty, a Museum Assistant for the Alaska Heritage Museum at Wells Fargo, in Anchorage, was surprised and delighted to discover that it was made by one of her own relatives!”

[Old bottles discovered at Baranov Museum](#)

Published in the Kodiak Daily Mirror, 08/19/10

“The oldest building in Alaska revealed a surprise Monday, when restoration carpenter Don Corwin found three bottles inside a window frame sealed up decades ago to make a darkroom.

“He came up the stairs and said, ‘I think we’ve got some treasure,’” Baranov Museum executive director Katie Oliver said. “It’s always extra exciting to find pieces of history inside your historical building.””

[The Resurrection Bay Historical Society hires new development director](#)

Published in the Seward City News, 10/21/10

“The Resurrection Bay Historical Society welcomes Seward resident Chellie Skoog as its newly hired development director. Skoog’s assignment is to organize and manage the Capital Campaign for the new Seward Community Library Museum (SCLM).”

[Talkeetna Historical Society lawsuit settled](#)

Broadcast by KTNA FM, 10/26/10

“The lawsuit filed against the Talkeetna Historical Society by Steve Van Troba has been dismissed.

The case was in and out of court for over 3 years. The case was originally filed as a real estate matter in the summer of 2007 and included a suit against the Mat Su Borough, Michael Kelly — the museum curator at the time, and the Talkeetna Historical Society.”

[Talkeetna-historical-society-in-dire-need-of-board-members and a curator](#)

Broadcast by KTNA FM, 02/16/11

“The Talkeetna Historical Society has been in a state of disarray since Curator Michael Kelly died last summer. At a meeting on Tuesday night, concerned Talkeetna residents and three remaining board members began formulating a plan to get the non-profit’s reorganization under way.”

[**Museum, Archive or Library? State Considers Future of Stratton.**](#)

Broadcast by KCAW FM, 02/02/11

The purchase of Sheldon Jackson College’s former library building by the state Division of Libraries, Archives, and Museums poses an interesting question: Which will the new institution be? Top state officials were in Sitka this week (Tue 2-1-11) to look at the Stratton Library, and the opportunity it represents.

[**Photo discovery includes images believed to be first of area**](#)

Published by the Mat-Su Valley Frontiersman, 1/31/11

It arrived at the Museum of Alaska Transportation and Industry in 2006 unbidden and unheralded, at the bottom of a box of Alaska artifacts Aleta Dyer had sent from Missouri. Inside the box, among assorted loose photos from the estate of Robert R. Stroup of Wasilla, Pat Durand, a volunteer at the museum, found a small album with three loose photos and 61 others affixed to thick, dark gray fiber pages.

Professional Development and Training Opportunities

Alaska Native Libraries, Archives and Museums Summit

Northern Light: Keeping the Stories Alive



Photo Credit: Dave Anderson

This summit is intended for professional and paraprofessional staff members working in Alaska

libraries, museums, and cultural centers that serve a significant Alaska Native population or who work with Alaska Native cultural materials. This summit was envisioned by a focus group of Alaska Native librarians, archivists, and cultural center staff. The summit will offer training at the paraprofessional and professional level as well as serving as a launching point for a strategic plan to make training in our fields more accessible for cultural heritage agencies throughout Alaska. Scholarships applications are available that cover lodging, travel, and registration please contact the ANLAMS Project Coordinator at anlams@alaska.gov.

Pre-conferences: Wednesday, April 27, 2011:

- AHSRAB: Archival Collection Care and Preservation Training (full day)
- Libraries: Sharing Our Stories and Cultures (full day)
- Museums: Disaster Preparedness Planning for Small Institutions (full day) and Collections Care Basics at the Anchorage Museum (full day)

Conference Training Tracks: Thursday, April 28 through 1:00 pm Saturday, April 30

- Grants and grant-writing
- Archives
- Museums
- Libraries
- Alaska Languages

Invited Speakers include:

- Willie Hensley, First Alaskans Institute
- Sven Haakanson, Jr., Alutiiq Museum & Rep
- Paul Ongtooguk, University of Alaska, Fairbanks
- Cheryl Metoyer, University of Washington
- Dr. Gregory Cajete, University of New Mexico
- Dr. Loriene Roy, University of Texas, Austin
- Alison Freese, Institute of Museum and Library Services
- Jill Norwood, National Museum of the American Indian
- Dean Dawson, Alaska's State Archivist
- Bill Schneider, University of Alaska Fairbanks
- Joan Kane, Award Winning Poet
- Susan Means, National Archives Pacific Region

Events:

Alaska Native Heritage Center Opening Ceremony and Celebration

Smithsonian Arctic Studies Center and Anchorage Museum Reception and Tour

For more information contact our Project Coordinator:

Angela Demma anlams@alaska.gov

907-717-9112 800-776-6566 (in Alaska)

Major funding provided by:

- Alaska State Library, Alaska Division of Libraries, Archives, and Museums
- Institute of Museum and Library Services

The Next AASLH Sponsored Webinar

Webinar #3: Hope is Not a Strategy: Raising Money in a Challenging Economy

Live webinar, Thursday, March 10, 2-3:15 pm Eastern Time

Instructor: Thomas R. Ryan, President & CEO, LancasterHistory.org

You may sign up for the entire series or select individual sessions. Register for the free webinars at <http://www.aaslhnetwork.org/steps2011/> Pre-registration at least one day in advance of each webinar is required. The webinars will be recorded for on-demand viewing later.

Visit www.aaslh.org/steps for more information about StEPs (Standards and Excellence Program for History Organizations), a self-study program with no deadlines and no eligibility requirements that helps small- and mid-sized history organizations meet national museum standards.

MLIS Scholarships for American Indians and Alaska Natives – Apply Now for Circle of Learning for Fall 2011

Please help us share the news about a scholarship opportunity available to American Indians and Alaska Natives who want to earn a fully online ALA-accredited Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) degree.

The Circle of Learning program <http://slisweb.sjsu.edu/circleoflearning/> is offered through a partnership between the San Jose School of Library and Information Science (SLIS) and the American Indian Library Association (AILA), and is made possible by a generous grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services. Current SLIS students as well as prospective students who plan to apply for admission to the School's MLIS program for the Fall 2011 semester are eligible for Circle of Learning scholarships.

Please note that Circle of Learning students need to be admitted to the School's MLIS program before being considered for scholarship funding. Applications are being accepted now through March 31, 2011 for admission to San Jose State University's School of Library and Information Science for Fall 2011. Fall classes begin August 24, 2011. For more information about how to apply to the School's fully online MLIS program, please visit: http://slisweb.sjsu.edu/admissions/mlis_application.htm .

Students interested in applying for Circle of Learning scholarships should take note of upcoming scholarship application deadlines. The Fall 2011 deadline to apply for Circle of Learning scholarships is March 25, 2011.

Details regarding eligibility and application materials are available on the project website at <http://slisweb.sjsu.edu/circleoflearning/>. We also invite you to contact Heather Devine, the Circle of Learning Project Manager, at hhdevine@gmail.com. Heather would be happy to talk with you and answer any questions you may have regarding this scholarship opportunity.

You may also attend the Circle of Learning [Open House](#) on Elluminate on March 3 to learn about the program from current students and project managers.

To learn more about the American Indian Library Association and its initiatives to improve library and information services for American Indians, visit <http://www.ailanet.org/>.

NPS Conserv-o-Grams Are Now Available Online

The U.S. National Park Service Museum Management Program is pleased to announce the publication of several new Conserv-o-Gram technical leaflets on the following topics:

How to Select Gloves: An Overview for Collections Staff

Care and Identification of Objects Made from Plastic

Preparing and Storing Geological Drill Cores

Digital Storage Media

The National Park Service [NPS] Conserve O Gram [COG series is geared to collections management staff. Technical leaflets cover a range of collections types, including archives, ceramics, digital media, fine arts, furniture, leatherwork, natural history collections, photographs, and textiles. The COGs address specific procedures, techniques and materials on preservation, security, fire and curatorial safety, agents of deterioration, packing and shipping, storage, and disaster preparedness.

The NPS Conserve O Gram series and other NPS museum publications are available for free download at <http://www.nps.gov/museum/publications/>.

Volunteer Viewpoint:

By Fran Dameron, Volunteer Curatorial Assistant

When I moved to Juneau in 1999 I knew I would want to find a volunteer position. I had been a volunteer curatorial assistant at the Heard Museum in Phoenix for more than 20 years and found the work interesting and satisfying. So when I felt a little settled in my new home I applied at the Alaska State Museum (ASM) for a similar position. I began to work there in early 2000. With a much smaller staff than at the Heard, the State Museum seemed closer, warmer and very welcoming to an outsider.



Fran Dameron with her "Volunteer of the Year" award presented by Museums Alaska

I work under the supervision of the Registrar and help mainly with labeling new acquisitions and writing catalog descriptions. But there are enough other tasks that keep life in the basement interesting. I have made storage boxes, backer rod rings to stabilize round-bottomed artifacts, Ethafoam mounts for model kayaks and Tyvek bags for paintings and large pots. I have done a little photography, spent an entire morning carrying many loads of artifacts to the basement as an exhibit ended at a time when the elevator was not operating. Talk about an aerobic workout! When new sliding racks for paintings were installed last year I was charged with filling them and recording each item's position. I am currently working on a full inventory of the stored collection.

While I enjoy the feeling of accomplishment when finishing these tasks, the most important element to me is the feeling that I am a significant part of the operation of ASM and that I am working among friends.

LAMP light

The Library Archives and Museums Project is pleased to report that the design team is well past the half point in schematic (35%) design, with completion of schematic design scheduled for mid March. For more on this exciting project please visit the project blog <http://www.alaskalamp.blogspot.com/>

Alaska Film Day Reminder

Now is the time to start working on your short film about your museum to submit for Alaska Museum Day, May 14 2011. We have received 3 entries so far. The deadline for submission is March 1, so grab your video camera and start filming! Questions? Contact Scott Carrlee 1-888-913-6873 scott.carrlee@Alaska.gov.

Book Report

by Amy Taylor

There are many wonderful collections care reference books that might hold the perfect solution to a problem at your museum if only you knew it. In this section we offer an overview of many common museum collections reference tools which may very well be sitting on the shelf of your museum's library just waiting for you to dust them off and ask them for help. We will start off the review with a look at the resources in the [Institute of Museum and Library Services Connecting to Collections Bookshelf](#) commonly referred to as the IMLS Bookshelf for short.

The IMLS Bookshelf is a twenty-three item "set of 'power tools' that provide immediate answers to conservation issues faced by museums, libraries, and archives," according to Terry

Davis, President and CEO of the American Association for State and Local History. Created in 2007, the IMLS Bookshelf was distributed free of charge to small and medium sized libraries and museums. In addition to a core set of texts, the bookshelf contains DVDs, posters and on-line resources which can be found at <http://www.imls.gov/collections/resources/index.htm>

To begin our review of the IMLS Bookshelf, we will take a look at the grand-daddy of collections resources: the [National Park Service Museum Handbook Part I: Museum Collections](#). As with many government manuals, the NPS *Museum Handbook Part I* is ponderously large and housed in not one, but two, thick, blue binders. (It is also available on-line at the link above.) The first binder contains the original comprehensive manual and the second binder contains appendices of things that were left out or discovered after the original manual was published. Luckily, the entire document is numbered, referenced and indexed with the same alacrity as the Bible, so it is easy to find your way around. In fact, it is helpful to think of it as the Bible of Museum Collections and use it as a starting place when looking up a particular subject.

Here is a quick overview of the chapters:

Chapter 1: NPS Museums and Collections, in which the National Park Service defines things like “What is a museum anyway?” and the difference between paleontological and biological collections, then lists the laws governing things so defined, and gives the history of how we got into this state of affairs.

Chapter 2: Scope of Collections, in which the NPS explains how to create a “Scope of Collections Statement,” a business-plan blueprint for museums done with meticulous, attention-to-detail, government-style so that your museum will succeed and not get sued.

Chapter 3: Preservation: Getting Started, in which the NPS offers a language that we can use to talk about museum stuff using more accurate terms than “stuff,” such as, “conservation treatment,” or “collection condition survey,” for which there is also the inevitable government acronym (CCS). Resources which use this language such as the [Museum Handbook](#) itself and informative leaflets known as [Conserve O Grams](#) or COGs (seriously) are discussed. All of these resources can be found on-line through the national [Museum Management Program](#) website.

Chapter 4: Museum Collections Environment, in which useful information is imparted on how to keep the inside of a museum and the objects therein from having a continuously blustery day.

Chapter 5: Biological Infestation, in which non-human pests (including bees) are discretely discussed and strategies revealed regarding how to frustrate little vermin’s’ mission to take over your museum.

Chapter 6: Handling, Packing and Shipping, in which invaluable information gleaned from years of other people’s “oopsees” is imparted on how best to move very, valuable objects through space.

Chapter 7: Museum Collection Storage, in which an ideal standard of museum space requirements is discussed leaving us all feeling inadequate and in need of renovation.

Chapter 8: Conservation Treatment, in which the NPS discusses when it is necessary to hire a professional conservator who can recall your collection from its sad yet poignant longing to become dust.

Chapter 9: Security and Fire Protection, in which the legal parameters of museum fire protection are discussed including who will be held responsible should you choose to skip this chapter.

Chapter 10: Emergency Planning, in which exciting things like volcanoes and earthquakes are imagined and dealt with calmly and efficiently.

Chapter 11: Curatorial Health and Safety, in which all the reasons that you should choose a less hazardous career are put forth plainly on paper where they seem to be less threatening.

Chapter 12: Curatorial Funding, Staffing and Reporting, in which we are bombarded with a whole flurry of acronyms, forms, and burning hoops of government websites which, should you manage to jump through successfully, will grant your organization the golden fish of limited, available funds.

Chapter 13: Museum Housekeeping, in which we are encouraged to not be too clean but instead to set up a regular, yet non-abrasive, maintenance routine that will keep our aging collections adorably rumpled and healthy for a very long time.

Next month, we will take a look at the appendices of the Museum Handbook Part I in which the NPS continues on its merry mission of sharing hard-won, museum conservation wisdom for the benefit of museums and people everywhere!

If you do not have the NPS Connecting to Collections Bookshelf you can borrow any of the books from the Alaska State Museum Lending Library. For more details go to http://www.museums.state.ak.us/lending_library.html

Summer Intern Returns



Former Sitka Curator, Ashley Kircher on left, Historical Society Director Bob Medinger in center, Jackie Fernandez holding the painting. Sitka Daily Sentinel Photo by James Poulson

Former Alaska State Museum Summer Intern, Jackie Fernandez, returns to Alaska as Curator of Collections & Exhibits at the Sitka Historical Society. Ms. Fernandez first came to Alaska while completing her Masters degrees at Tufts University in 2008 through the Alaska State Museum's Summer Internship Program. She worked at the Alaska Museum of Natural History cataloging and documenting conservation needs of a valuable collection of Alaskan Native artifacts, independently created an exhibition on Alaska Native science and culture, developed inquiry-based lessons and hands-on activities for children in grades Pre-K-12, and worked closely with the museum's Director of Education. While en route to Boston from Anchorage after finishing her internship, Ms. Fernandez was invited to work at the American Bald Eagle Foundation in Haines, where she spearheaded a project to label, document, photograph, and inventory the entire museum's collection and had the opportunity to assist Scott Carrlee, Curator of Museum Services at the Alaska State Museum with an assessment of the museum's collections needs. During both of her stints in Alaska, she sought additional opportunities for professional development by volunteering at local history, art, and anthropological museums on her "days off".

Jackie is very pleased to return to Alaska a third time and brings with her a breadth of experience in collections management, interpretation and education, institutional planning, museum administration, and operational management. She has worked for various museums and cultural institutions including the Boston Center for the Arts, the Massachusetts Historical Society, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, the National Park Service, and several historical societies in Massachusetts.

StEPs program

The next StEPs webinar is:

Hope is Not a Strategy: Raising Money in a Challenging Economy

[Thursday, March 10, 2011](#)

[2:00 – 3:15 p.m. Eastern Time](#)

(1 pm Central, 12 pm Mountain, 11 am Pacific, 10 am Alaska, and 9 am Hawaii)

Presenter: [Thomas R. Ryan](#), President & CEO, LancasterHistory.org

Join us to discuss current challenges facing history organizations in this uncertain economic climate. How do we strike a balance between organizational expectations and needs on the one hand and the know-how needed to raise funds on the other? Instructor Thomas Ryan asks all participants to give thought to the following questions prior to the webinar: Are there strategies that have worked for you in the past that are no longer working? In your relationships with donors, do you see new patterns emerging in the past 36 months that suggest the need to revise your methods? What are those patterns? Are you prepared to answer challenging questions posed by members, donors, and other stakeholders about your organization's long-term financial sustainability? Tune in and join the conversation!

Professional Time Wasting on the Web:

Have you been wondering what is going on the museum side of things in Egypt?

<http://www.drhawass.com/blog/situation-egyptian-antiquities-today><http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/jonathanjonesblog/2011/jan/31/egypt-museums-must-be-defended><http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/jonathanjonesblog/2011/feb/03/raiders-egyptian-museum-cairo-egypt>

Honoring Art, Honoring Artists

Is a great article about the new Northwest Coast Gallery at the Denver Art Museum.

http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/06/arts/design/06names.html?_r=1&emc=eta1

A Settlement was reach in an important case of the Visual Rights Act.

<http://ascalonstudios.wordpress.com/2011/02/07/3/>

Rare Eskimo Shaman Mask Sells for Record Breaking \$2.5 Million

<http://www.cnn.com/2011/US/01/19/surreal.yupik.masks/index.html?iref=allsearch>