

BULLETIN

Issue 2

AN INFORMATION SOURCE FOR ALASKA'S MUSEUM COMMUNITY

February 1997

New Conservator

The Alaska State Museum is pleased to announce that Brook Bowman has been hired as the new Conservator, a position that has been unfilled for more than a year. Her major responsibilities will be to assist other museums in the state with the care and safeguarding of their collections, through workshops and direct consultation on specific problems.

Most recently Bowman has been in private practice as a conservator and consultant in Florida, and before that, in Utah. She has recent experience in Alaska, where she was hired to do work on *Agayuliyararput* (Our Way of Making Prayer), the highly praised exhibition of Yup'ik masks organized by the Anchorage Museum of History and Art. Bowman has a wide variety of museum experiences, including work with small museums and volunteers. She worked with the Fort Douglas Museum to achieve

certification under the U.S. Army's museum program. She supervised and implemented conservation and exhibit standards for the Museum of Church History and Art in Salt Lake City during its development and construction in the early 1980s.

Bowman studied Museology and Conservation at Texas Tech University and served internships at the Utah Museum of Natural History and the National Park Service at Harper's Ferry, West Virginia.

As the state's only full-time conservator, Brook will be available to assist museums in areas such as: handling and storage of objects, environmental controls, stabilizing object deterioration, cleaning, repair, light degradation, staff training and proper use of storage and exhibit materials.

You may contact her at 465-4806 or email bbowman@educ.state.ak.us.

Traveling Exhibits

The Alaska State Museum is preparing a new exhibition to travel to other museums: *Kayaks of Alaska and Siberia*. It is based on a 1986 show at the Alaska State Museum that provided the first comprehensive examination of the traditional kayaks of Alaska and Siberia.

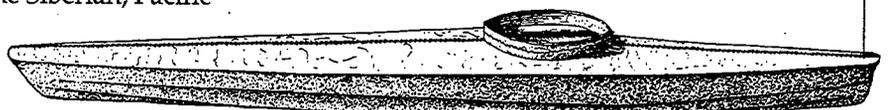
Kayaks may have existed for as long as 4,000 years in the North. They were vitally important for hunters, travelers and traders. Kayaks also provide a fascinating look at how form follows function, with design differences reflecting the different needs of kayak users.

Miniature models of historic kayaks are at the heart of the traveling exhibition.

The show includes examples of six different styles of kayaks: the Siberian, Pacific Eskimo, Aleut, North Alaska, Bering Strait and Bering Sea.

With models, authentic kayak accessories, tools and design blueprints, *Kayaks of Alaska and Siberia* is an exhibition for those interested in North Pacific history. Contemporary kayakers should also enjoy this exhibition.

The show will be contained in 8 exhibit cases, with accompanying text panels. It opened January 11 at the Sheldon Jackson Museum in Sitka. In March it will begin a tour to other museums in the state. If you are interested in obtaining this exhibit, or would like information on other exhibits available for loan from the Alaska State Museum, contact Mark Daughhetee, Curator of Exhibitions at 465-4819 or email mdaughhe@educ.state.ak.us.



Preventive Conservation Videos

The Alaska State Museum has 19 videotapes on preventive conservation available for loan to Alaska museums, historical societies and related organizations. Users may request up to three tapes at one time. Loans are for one week and the user is responsible for return postage. The tapes are about ten to fifteen minutes each, and were collaboratively produced by the Centre de conservation du Québec, the Canadian Conservation Institute and the Université du Québec à Montréal.

To borrow any of these videotapes contact: Ken DeRoux, Curator of Museum Services, at (907) 465-2396.

The titles are:

1. Introduction to Preventive Conservation
2. Light and Lighting

3. Relative Humidity and Temperature
4. Pollutants
5. Integrated Pest Management
6. Packing and Transportation of Museum Objects
7. Storage
8. Protecting Objects on Exhibition
9. Disaster Contingency Planning
10. Closing a Seasonal Museum
11. The Condition Report
12. Handling Museum Objects
13. The Care of Paintings
14. The Care of Works on Paper
15. The Care of Sculptures
16. The Care of Metal Objects
17. The Care of Furniture
18. The Care of Textiles
19. The Care of Museum Objects

Approaching Grant Application Deadlines:

Institute of Museum & Library Services
1100 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Room 609
Washington, D.C. 20506
Phone: (202) 606-8539

- | | |
|----------|-------------------------------|
| Feb. 14 | General Operating Support |
| Feb. 28 | Museum Assessment Program III |
| Feb. 28 | Conservation Project Support |
| March 14 | Museum Assessment Program II |
| March 21 | Museum Leadership Initiatives |
| April 11 | Professional Services Program |
| April 25 | Museum Assessment Program I |

Grant-in-Aid Program

Alaska State Museum

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| April 1 | Application forms available |
| May 31 | Grant-in-Aid applications due |

These are mailed to all Alaska Museums and Historical Societies. If you think you are not on our mailing list, contact Ken DeRoux at (907) 465-2396.

National Historical Society Grants
741 Miller Drive, SE, Suite D-2
Leesburg, VA. 20175 Phone: (703) 779-8338
April 1 Proposals deadline

This new organization (1996) offers grants in three categories: Historic Preservation, Heritage Education, and State & Local History. Write or call for a prospectus.

Alaska Humanities Forum

421 West 1st Ave. Suite 210
Anchorage, AK 99501 Phone: (907) 272-5341

The Alaska Humanities Forum is currently revising guidelines for their major grant program. They will be offering most of their funding as matching grants. Their major grants have usually had a May 1 deadline, but contact them for current information. They also offer small grants of \$2500 or less with no deadline for applications.

Sheldon Jackson Museum Hands-On Collection

More than 500 objects, including artifacts, books, slides, photographs and audio and visual tapes, are available to be checked out for classroom or other educational use from the Sheldon Jackson Museum in Sitka.

The Hands-On Collection can be integrated into curricula in a variety of ways: for enhancing lesson plans, as classroom exhibits, as research materials for reports and presentations, or as inspiration for writing,

drama and art projects. Objects come with background information.

These materials are used by more schools and museums each year, so you may need to reserve them well in advance. Copies of the Hands-On inventory may be obtained from the Museum. Write the Sheldon Jackson Museum, Hands-On Collection, 104 College Drive, Sitka, AK 99835-7657, or call (907) 747-8981 or fax your request to (907) 747-3004.

NOTES on the Western Museums Association Conference

Salt Lake City
October
16-19, 1996

by Ken DeRoux

Workshop for State Museum Associations

I attended this along with Donna Matthews, who was representing Museums Alaska. It proved to be a valuable workshop and there was a consensus that it become a regular feature at WMA. WMA plans to initiate a purchasing co-operative, expanding on one now operated by the Colorado/Wyoming Association of Museums. Significant discounts can be had for commonly used items such as conservation supplies. Stay tuned for further information.

Endearing Your Museum to Your Community

A panel of staff from other museums discussed ways to create ties between museums and their communities. This closeness can help mobilize political support for museums.

One idea was to stimulate membership by involving members in projects that build camaraderie. At a Reno auto museum, there's an adopt-a-car program in which members come in and wax cars, eat pizza and receive t-shirts. They also get their name on the exhibit label as a caretaker.

It is important to get people into the building as much as possible. A museum should be available to the community for activities and events. This can be through rentals or free use.

Another panel member talked about using teenage students as trained docents to lead other groups of younger students in educational activities. An on-going teenage-training program will build a solid base of community support as these people become adults.

Cost Recovery Considerations in Justifying Technology Use

Presenters talked about the economic impact of the electronic age on museums. How can we justify the costs of new technology?

An obvious example is that e-mail saves money in postage, staff time and envelopes. One might also compare a web page to a color brochure. Which is cheaper? Which reaches more people? Who is the audience? Alternatives that once seemed futuristic are quickly demanding consideration.

Licensing images for reproduction is a

growing source of revenue. However presenters warned against turning over photos from your collection to a vendor who wants to publish them on CD. When they copy them, they may be able to claim copyright.

It was observed that CD-Roms as a sales item are unlikely to recoup their production costs.

Emphasis was placed on the importance of planning before changing over to electronic data systems, such as collections databases. Museums should know, and have available, all of their resources: text, images and related research, and know how it is to be used or retrieved, before they start entering or converting data.

The importance of standard terminology and method of entry was stressed. Proper organization of data can save money by avoiding mistakes and duplication of effort.

Concerning the issue of archiving photos onto CDs, the presenters recommended against buying a scanner; it is better to go to an outside vendor and use Kodak Photo CD technology instead. This scanner technology is superior and is becoming the standard. Images cost about \$1 each to put on CD. The CD then serves as a master, and can be downloaded for other uses. They also recommended scanning from transparencies for higher quality.

Presenters also recommended having a "migration" strategy. In other words, make sure there is an archival, back-up copy of all software and a functioning piece of hardware to run all programs. Keep these in a safe place. Then, as technology changes, you will always be able to convert to new applications.

Permanent Exhibits vs. Temporary Exhibits

Margie Marino, of the Denver Museum of Natural History, talked about the differences between permanent and temporary exhibitions. She said people visit permanent exhibits to learn. They often visit a temporary exhibition because it is an "event".

Ten Characteristics of Permanent Exhibits:

- makes best possible use of exhibit medium (in other words, a book or movie wouldn't be better);
- addresses timeless concepts or issues;
- puts the museum's best foot forward;
- is primarily designed for a local region or community;
- gives an audience what it can't get elsewhere;
- is built with expert knowledge of the local audience;
- is usable for schools and educational groups;
- is subject to systematic evaluation during development;
- uses the best materials affordable; and
- meets objectives of the institution and is primarily educational.

Native American and Museum Collaboration Network

This is a Professional Interest Committee of the American Association of Museums being headed up by the Museum Studies Center at the Smithsonian and the National Museum of the American Indian.

Its purpose is to promote awareness of Native American issues among AAM members and to support Native Americans working in the museum profession. The organization is still in its formative stages. If you're interested in more information, contact Alyce Sadongei at the National Museum of the American Indian, 470 L'Enfant Plaza, Room 7103 MRC 934, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20560.

Advocacy

An advocacy work session included a number of suggestions to help museums survive the current financial tough times. Among the suggestions and observations:

- Utah developed a conservative, convincing, econometric report to show museums' positive economic impact, to support funding for an office of museum services. It might serve as a model for those developing economic profiles.
- Pay attention to your community and its issues.
- Speak with a unified voice.
- Don't let the debate "cultural funding versus life and death issues" take hold. One way to defuse it is to show that museums are a positive force for people trying to "do the right thing", in other words, lead better lives. Museums are preventive care for social ills. They deal with lasting cultural values.
- Educational lobbying should occur before the beginning of the legislative session.
- Your bill (if you have one) should be among the top three of your legislative sponsor, or it probably won't go anywhere.
- Take a decision maker to lunch. Eating together can create a bond.
- Be aware that people, including lawmakers, can be intimidated by museums and museum people. We represent a great deal of knowledge!
- View legislators as an "underserved" constituency. Help them serve their communities.

Alaska Museums on the Internet

A growing number of museums in Alaska are adding their presence to the internet. To make it easier to find them, we have clustered their address links in one place on the State Museum's web page. Our address is: <http://ccl.alaska.edu/local/museum/home.html>. Then click on "Museums and Historical Societies in Alaska." These listings also contain a wide variety of other links, so be sure and pay a visit! If you add your museum to the internet, or if you know of a listing that should be added, please contact Ken DeRoux at (907) 465-2396.

- Simon Paneak Memorial Museum, Anaktuvuk Pass
- Alaska Aviation Heritage Museum, Anchorage
- Anchorage Museum of History and Art
- Alaska Museum of Natural History, Eagle River
- University of Alaska Museum, Fairbanks
- Juneau Douglas City Museum
- Sitka National Historical Park
- Sheldon Jackson Museum, Sitka
- Valdez Museum and Historical Archive
- Museum of Alaska Transportation and Industry, Wasilla

Related site:

- Arctic Studies Center, Anchorage

President Signs Museum and Library Services Act

In late September, President Clinton approved legislation that consolidates federal museum, library and information services into the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

The IMLS consolidates federal programs of support for museums currently administered by the Institute of Museum Services (IMS) and support for libraries currently administered by the Department of Education.

The legislation takes effect in fiscal year 1997, which began October 1 of this year. Speaking about the newly established IMLS, Diane B. Frankel, IMS Director and the new IMLS Director, said, "This new agency sends a strong signal about the contribution museums and libraries make to education and to communities across the country. I look forward to working with libraries and museums to ensure that the tremendous power they have to enrich our lives is realized."

Some provisions of the Museum and Library Services Act of 1996 include:

- Authorization for \$150 million for libraries and \$28.7 million for museums. (*Note:* Funds for libraries and museums continue to be appropriated by different Congressional committees)
- Continuation of museum programs to encourage and assist museums in their educational role.
- Establish a director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services with a four-year term. The position will alternate between people from library and museum back-grounds.
- Establish two deputy directors; one for the Office of Museum Services and one for the Office of Library Services.

Editor's note: The IMS section (apparently now the "Office" of Museum Services) is expected to function much as it has, at least for the near future. The budget appropriation for museums was actually increased, to \$22 million (still less than what was authorized), and the emphasis will continue to be on general operating support. The combined budget of the IMLS is now greater than that of either the NEA or the NEH.

Alaska Museums Receive Grants

The Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS), a federal agency, announced last fall that two Alaska museums were among those receiving General Operating Support grants in 1996. The Sheldon Museum in Haines received a \$57,000 grant and the Eagle Historical Society and Museum received \$15,229. IMS/GOS grants are awarded for a two-year period, and reflect a high level of achievement by the recipient. Cynthia Jones, of the Sheldon Museum, says the museum will hire some temporary workers to catch up on a backlog, as well as fund a number of other projects, such as building some additional modular cases for temporary exhibitions.

The Eagle Historical Society is using its

grant primarily to fund a director for the museum. Cassie D'Allesandro, the newly hired director, says they feel privileged to receive the grant and that it's a "testimony to the efforts of Elva Scott, whose hard work has kept the museum going on a volunteer basis for many years."

The Museum of Alaska Transportation and Industry in Wasilla received a Conservation Assessment Program (CAP) grant from the National Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Property. The CAP program is funded by the IMLS.

The Alaska State Museum also received an IMLS grant for conservation. The \$15,450 will buy new storage cabinets for its Alaska Native and historical garment collection.

Interns

Have you considered an intern program at your museum? Graduate students with museum expertise can sometimes augment your activities in ways that volunteers can't. The Alaska State Museum keeps a file of

recent intern inquiries and may be able to assist you. We can also give you information on setting up an internship program. Contact Ken DeRoux at (907)465-2396.

Alaska State Museums

Division of Libraries, Archives & Museums
Alaska State Department of Education

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<http://ccl.alaska.edu/local/museum/home.html>

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