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Press Release

SHELDON JACKSON MUSEUM

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SITKA'S ALASKA FLAG DESIGN CONTEST ENTRIES SHOWN AT THE SHELDON JACKSON MUSEUM

Eighty-two years ago the citizens of Alaska decided that eight gold stars on a dark blue field, representing the constellation of the Great Bear and North Star, would become the official design of the Alaska flag. Benny Benson, a schoolboy from Seward, had entered the winning proposal in a contest along with school children from across the territory.

As part of Sitka's Alaska Day celebration, the Sheldon Jackson Museum will put on display seven original entries submitted by school children from Sitka as part of the contest, which took place in 1927. The drawings will be on display from October 13 to 20, with a special reception on Saturday, October 17, from 1 to 3 pm, hosted by The Friends of the Sheldon Jackson Museum. The museum will be free to the public all day on October 17.

The children from Sitka who submitted the entries being displayed were: Raynold Burke, Charles Burkhart, Robert DeArmond, Victor Hanlon, Ester Jennings, Florence Peterson, and Robert Rogers Jr. The drawings, along with other submissions from around the state, are in the collection of the Alaska State Library Historical Collections in Juneau.

In 1926 territorial governor George A. Parks, observing that Alaska had no official flag, arranged for a flag design contest for all Alaska school children in grades 7-12. The contest was organized by the Alaska branch of the American Legion. Students submitted a total of 142 entries. Although there were many creative concepts, Benson's simple, elegant layout was unanimously declared the winner.

Winter hours at the Sheldon Jackson Museum are 10am to 4pm, Tuesday through Saturday. Admission is \$3. Free for those 18 and under and members of either Friends of the Sheldon Jackson Museum or Friends of the Alaska State Museum. An annual pass for both state museums is available for \$15. Accommodations can be made for visitors with special needs by calling the Museum at 907.747.8981.

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