



Alaska State Museums Bulletin 36

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Welcome to the newest version of the Alaska State Museums Bulletin publication. We are very excited to now be able to offer the eBulletin as a monthly, web-based publication. Keeping up with the dynamic growth in museums and cultural centers in Alaska and the statewide outreach efforts of the Alaska State Museums produces a constant demand for us to find methods of communication that both serve the communities of Alaska and are adaptable to the ever changing constituency. With web based delivery of information becoming the standard method of communication across the globe, it was time for our process of reaching out with this publication to take on a new form.

This is our first issue. Please take the time to read it through and respond to it with comments, criticisms, suggestions and kudos. Our desire is for the eBulletin to become another of a number of dynamic tools available to museums and cultural centers statewide in sharing insights and seeking answers in our ongoing common goal of providing the best experiences possible to the community and seasonal users of our facilities.

Thanks and stay in touch.

*Robert Banghart
Chief Curator
Alaska State Museums*



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Success with Youth Activities

By Lisa Golisek, Alaska State Museum Protection & Visitor Services Manager

It feels magical, what happens, when a child meets an artist, sees and hears about the artist's work, and is handed the artist's tools and materials to use. Creativity is inspired and within minutes the child is expressing their own ideas through a medium and with techniques to which they were introduced just moments before. Art-focused activities that bring the artist, their art, and elementary grade youth together have been offered dozens of times at the Alaska State Museum. The experiences have led to excellent reviews and requests from students and parents to do more.



Jane Terzis' portrait drawing workshop using a model.

At the museum, children spread out around low 4' X 8' tables placed on tarps stretched out to cover the gallery floors. We probably would have never offered the chance for the students to work in the galleries if we had a classroom in the museum. However, allowing the students to work surrounded by art expertly displayed in the galleries has proven to be an important part of this inspirational and rewarding experience. Volunteers keep materials organized, assist the students when they need another hand, and help us maintain a youth to adult ratio of 8 to 1 to ensure the students all receive individual attention and the environment remains safe for the students and the artwork on display. Parent participation is also encouraged and often makes a student feel comfortable and safe in an environment which the student may be experiencing for the first time. We provide parents with materials to create too and have found this encourages them to do art as well and also inhibits them from doing the activity for the child.

Over a decade ago, an amazing arts educator and retired school administrator, Cristine Crooks, assisted us in designing the template we use for creating the activities. Cristine provided us with ideas on how to make the workshops happen on a tight budget, successfully publicize the events, select the artists, and evaluate the results.

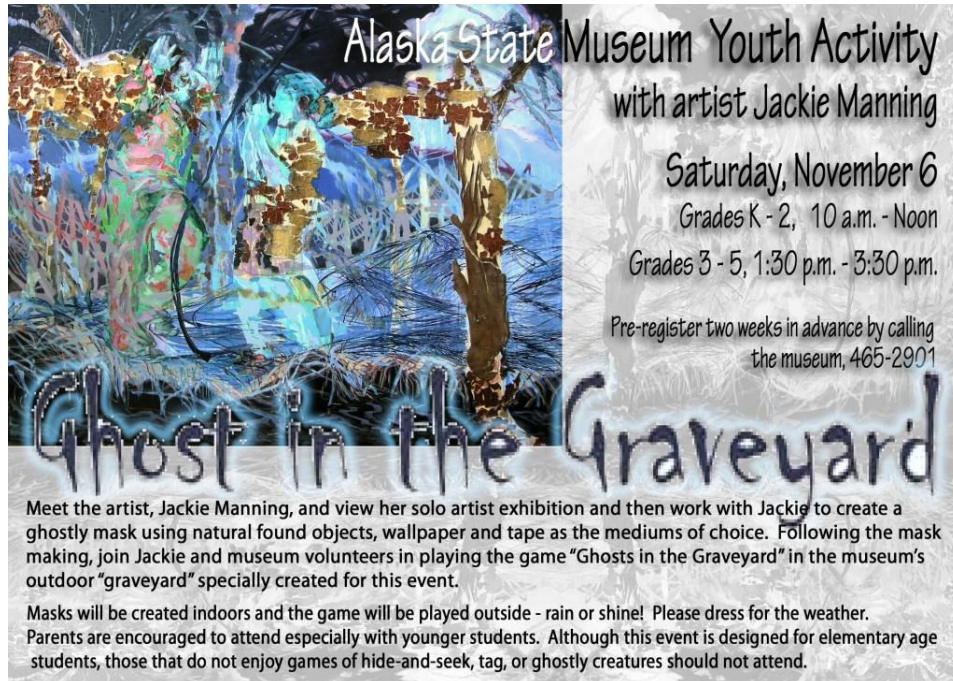
The museum is fortunate to have an affiliated non-profit organization, the Friends of the Alaska State Museum, as the sponsor of most of these activities. They have received several youth activity grants from the City and Borough of Juneau offered through sales tax revenue. Local businesses, organizations, foundations, and agency partnerships also provide funds and other contributions. These grants are offered annually on a competitive basis and must be applied for in March. Detailing the specific in-kind donations from The Friends organization and the museum itself is a big part of the annual grant application.

We take great care in selecting the artist. Selections are based on a good fit with the exhibits on display at the museum as well as the artists' ability and interest in working with elementary and middle school students. We provide an honorarium for their time working with the students at \$100 per hour for a two-hour workshop.

Making the experience authentic by providing the same materials and tools used by the artist is as important as choosing the artist and having the artwork on display. We also consider the ability to do a project or program based on availability of the supplies, safety, and time constraints.

The school district assists us with getting information into the hands of students and parents. We create an email announcement that the assistant superintendent broadcasts to all the district educators and they in turn can distribute to families or put on their webpage. We also create a postcard-sized announcement that is duplicated and then bundled in groups of 25 (one for each student in the class). These small but tangible announcements are delivered to the school district office and the office in turn distributes them through their interdepartmental mail system to the schools. The total of these small announcements is roughly 3,000 per activity. This might seem like a lot but it gains not only a good number of attendees for workshops but a healthy marketing buzz in the community. Even when the children do not participate in these activities, they and their parents learn that the museum is a happy, healthy and active place for children and families. We time the announcements so that teachers send them home with their normal weekly packets.

This, along with PSAs and press releases to local radio stations, the newspaper, and the community weekly newspaper, get the word out.



The poster features a vibrant, abstract painting of a ghostly figure in a graveyard setting. The text on the poster reads:

Alaska State Museum Youth Activity
with artist Jackie Manning
Saturday, November 6
Grades K - 2, 10 a.m. - Noon
Grades 3 - 5, 1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Pre-register two weeks in advance by calling
the museum, 465-2901

Ghost in the Graveyard

Meet the artist, Jackie Manning, and view her solo artist exhibition and then work with Jackie to create a ghostly mask using natural found objects, wallpaper and tape as the mediums of choice. Following the mask making, join Jackie and museum volunteers in playing the game "Ghosts in the Graveyard" in the museum's outdoor "graveyard" specially created for this event.

Masks will be created indoors and the game will be played outside - rain or shine! Please dress for the weather. Parents are encouraged to attend especially with younger students. Although this event is designed for elementary age students, those that do not enjoy games of hide-and-seek, tag, or ghostly creatures should not attend.

Announcement email to educators and parents and the museum email notification listserve database.

All the museum activities for youth are offered free of charge. Registration is taken over the phone and parents are encouraged to participate when they call to register.

Generally our activities focus on opportunities for students in elementary school. For each activity, the museum generally conducts one workshop for students in grades K – 2 and one for grades 3 -5 to allow us to cater to the specific needs and abilities of each age range.

The museum has some great volunteers that enjoy working with youth, but another ready source of willing hands to help with set up, clean up and material organization are found among high school seniors seeking to do community service for government and art classes.

We also found success in creating a variety of centers to help students find what they need. Centers where students might paint are separate from others where they select materials, glue, dry their art, and mat or frame their work.



Center based activity - Making Snow Goggles



...and flirting with disaster, a center for painting with berries.



Working with Clay workshop artist demonstration before students experiment on their own



Ray Troll showing students his work using pastel crayons on black cason paper.

The voices and input from youth, parents, volunteers and artists have led us in many directions branching out to where we partner with agencies, businesses, and organizations and create family events such as archaeology fairs with opportunities to meet and learn from archaeologists throughout Southeast Alaska. We offer a popular winter science festival called Chill with the Family where we explore the science, stories, games, safety, and arts associated with winter in Alaska. This winter a special Alaska games carnival will be held in conjunction with The Great Alaska Games Show currently on display at the Alaska State Museum. Whether the activity is

large in scale or can occur in a smaller space they are based on the same relationship with the museum and basic principals we have established. It works like magic.



UAS professor Dan Montieth demonstrating how to lash together tree poles to create an ancient-style fish trap at an Alaska State Museum Archaeology Fair.



Museum volunteer, Beth Liebowitz, assists a student in learning how to throw a nerf arrow using an atl-atl while sitting in a kayak during an Archaeology Fair held at the museum



Participants learning about how animals adapt and survive in cold water and weather at the Chill with the Family event.



Volunteer Dick Callahan Assists young scientists in learning how harbor seals are perfectly suited to life among icebergs



Ossie Kairaiiak guest artist teaching yupik dance and story telling

Ask ASM

Question: We have a large painting that has fine construction dust on the front of it. How do you recommend cleaning the dust off? Thanks.

ASM: I would recommend purchasing a soft paintbrush, like one that is called a China bristle brush. You should be able to find one pretty cheap at the hardware store. The size should be 1.5 to 2 inches. Using a vacuum cleaner (HEPA filtering is preferred) with a hose attachment and holding the nozzle within an inch or two of where you are working with the brush, carefully fluff the dust off the surface of painting with the brush into the nozzle of the vacuum cleaner hose. Never put the nozzle directly on the painting as it could pull off loose paint. Start at the top of the painting and work your way down, all the while holding the nozzle about 2” away from the surface. What you are trying to do is get the dust airborne so that it will be sucked away by the vacuum.

Shaking the Money Tree

Grants, Grants and more Grants

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>

Also about IMLS in the news recently:

- **New Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)**

On December 22, 2010, the U.S. Senate confirmed Susan Hildreth, President Obama’s nominee to serve as the next Director of the IMLS by unanimous consent. Hildreth was nominated by President Obama on September 29, 2010. Prior to her role as the City Librarian of the Seattle Public Library, she served as California’s State Librarian, Deputy Director and City Librarian at the San Francisco Public Library, Deputy Library Director at the Sacramento Public Library, Head Librarian in Placer County (CA), Library Director for the Benicia Public Library (CA), and Branch Librarian at the Edison Township Library in New Jersey.

- **IMLS reauthorized**

The U.S. House of Representatives approved §3984, the Museum and Library Services Act of 2010, by a voice vote. The bill reauthorizes the Institute of Museum and Library Services for the next five years. For many months, the American Association of Museums (AAM) has been working in coalition with representatives from national, regional, and state organizations – including CAM, and representatives of the Federal-State Partnership Coalition – first within the museum field to reach a field-wide consensus on the proposal, then with numerous offices on Capitol Hill toward passage of a bill. “The fact that Congress has now unanimously approved its reauthorization is a tremendous victory for the museum field,” said AAM President Ford W. Bell. “It is a true testament to what is achievable when we work together.”

National Endowment for the Humanities

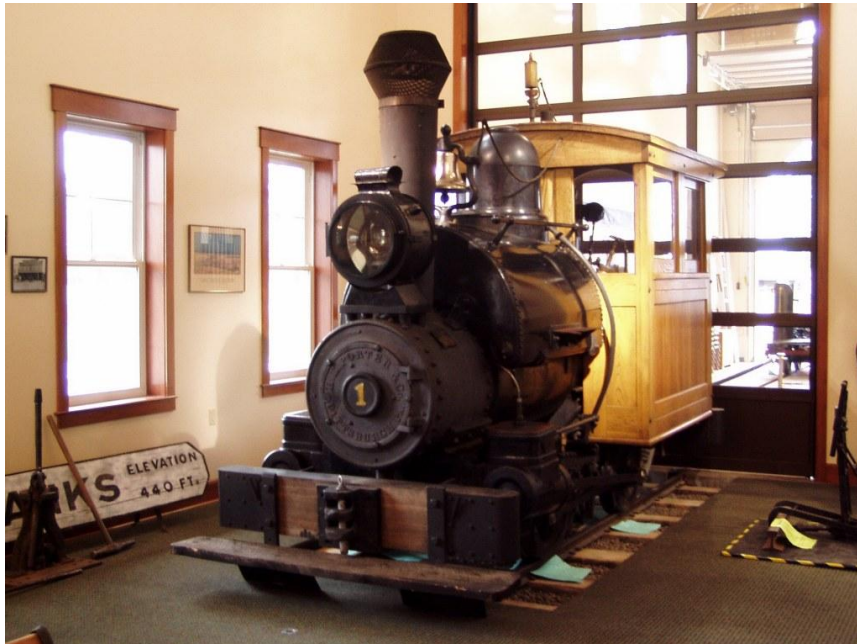
The NEH funds humanities-based projects. The primary program of interest to smaller Alaskan museums is the Preservation Assistance Grants for Smaller Institutions. This program is similar to the ASM's Grant in Aid program. Here is a brief description: Preservation Assistance Grants help small and mid-sized institutions—such as libraries, museums, historical societies, archival repositories, cultural organizations, town and county records offices, and colleges and universities—improve their ability to preserve and care for their humanities collections. These may include special collections of books and journals, archives and manuscripts, prints and photographs, moving images, sound recordings, architectural and cartographic records, decorative and fine art objects, textiles, archaeological and ethnographic artifacts, furniture, historical objects, and digital materials.

The deadline for this grant is May 3, 2011. For more information see the website: <http://www.neh.gov/grants/guidelines/pag.html>. It is not too early to start preparing your application for this grant.

Spotlight on Grant-in-Aid

The Tanana Valley Railroad Museum

by Yarrow Vaara ASM Museum Volunteer



Engine #1 on display in the museum

One of the recipients of the FY2010 Grant-in-Aid funding included a project funded by a Mini-Grant of \$2,000 to the Friends of the Tanana Valley Railroad (TVRR), a non-profit organization

that was formed in 1992 with the intention of restoring a rusted old train, Steam Engine #1. Their proposed project was to develop a finding-aid for the Tanana Mines Railroad and Tanana Valley Railroad. The funding of this project kicked off phase one of a long range plan to further develop and make available in one location a core of information relating to the TVRR. It would be open and accessible to locals and visitors interested in a better understanding of the role of the TVRR in the history of Interior Alaska.

This Mini-Grant allowed them to hire a professional researcher and a student researcher working together to flesh out the proper historical context of their main exhibit. Engine #1 has been restored by volunteers and old iron mechanics to the point that it has been offering passenger service on various holidays since 2000.

Their resulting finding-aid titled “Research Guide for the Tanana Valley Railroad” was completed as planned and reviews indicated that it is of professional quality and will prove to be a valuable addition to the organization. Developing this project resulted in the discovery of new materials that they had never heard of or hadn’t previously considered and, in the process, sparked interest in further research. In addition, TVRR volunteer staff has learned better methods of research. Future possibilities spawned from the project include a book-length biography of the founder of the Tanana Valley Railroad.

The second project goal included a review of the entire project, adding a professional opinion concerning avenues for research in the future, and particularly to further develop phases two and three of their long range plan. TVRR reports that one of the highlights of the project includes the discovery of documents that may change the current perception of the history of Fairbanks and its early survival.

ASM on the Road

Seward Museum Assessment

In late November/early December Scott Carrlee, Curator of Museum Services, went to Seward to do an assessment of the Seward Museum run by the Resurrection Bay Historical Society. The museum is in the midst of planning for a new location in a combined library and museum building. The assessment report will help in planning for the new facility as well as organizing the move of all the objects into the new facility. One of the people Scott worked with was Colleen Kelly. She wrote about her experience working with Scott:



Seward Museum

Seward Museum Assessment Experience

By Colleen Kelly, Resurrection Bay Historical Society volunteer

Better have a roll of Scotch tape and a flashlight at the ready if you plan on inviting Scott Carrlee to your museum any time soon. I'll go into detail about that a bit later.

In Seward we're in the midst of a long process to merge our community library and museum, which will culminate with the construction of a combined facility in 2012. Once the new building is complete, Resurrection Bay Historical Society, which started the Seward Museum in 1966, will retain ownership of its collection but will turn over museum operations to the City of Seward.

In preparation for making the move, the historical society together with the Seward Community Library asked the Alaska State Museum to conduct an assessment of artwork and artifacts in our collections. Thankfully the state decided to send Scott Carrlee, Curator of Museum Services, to our community for a three-day visit in November.

We were responsible for paying Scott's travel, lodging and per diem. Labor costs were covered by the state. What a bargain that turned out to be. We obtained the services of a museum professional for a fraction of what consultants would charge us for similar assistance. Plus we made a solid connection with someone we will continue to rely on for advice in the future.

During his visit to the museum, Scott methodically went through our collection and also graciously answered numerous questions about "all things museum." As is the case with many community museums in Alaska, our facility has long been operated through volunteer effort so the chance to have a professional on-site was greatly appreciated.

In discussing stewardship of collections, Scott said the top six items of concern are: light, climate, pollutants, pests, disaster and human interaction. Surprisingly, 80 percent of damage to museum collections is due to human interaction, which includes theft, mishandling, bad home

remedies, inappropriate mounts and so on. Many of these things are within our realm of control, so with a little knowledge we can make great inroads in protecting our collection. Scott zeroed in on the fur, leather and skin goods in our collection. That's when we pulled out the Scotch tape and put new batteries in our flashlight as we searched for any and all signs of bugs. Any museum with mukluks, skin masks and fur parkas is well advised to inspect these items for any sign of bug casings or evidence of fur that has shed. It gives me the creeps just writing about it, but a simple visual inspection is all it takes to see if there is a problem. Scott suggests instituting a chemical-free approach to getting rid of the pests. Bagging artifacts and then freezing them is an effective treatment. This approach also works to keep bugs from entering your museum in the first place. Before accepting artifacts containing leather, skin or fur, Scott says standard procedure should be to bag it and then freeze it. After returning to Juneau, Scott provided us with a written report detailing his suggestions on how to prepare our collection for the impending move. The report appendix contained invaluable information on topics ranging from proper object handling for moving to instituting a simple but effective system of Integrated Pest Management. It will serve as our "go-to" guide in upcoming months as we get closer to our goal of settling into a new museum.

Alaska Museums in the News

The Port Alexander Museum Grand Opening



Port Alexander Museum

The Port Alexander Museum recently had their grand opening. It was quite an event. To hear a full report on KCAW-FM Raven Radio click on this link.

http://kcaw.org/modules/local_news/index.php?op=centerBlock&ID=1036

Professional Development and Training Opportunities

Online Museum Class

The Alaska State Museums will again coordinate with MuseumClasses.org for an all Alaskan museum online class this spring. The topic of this class will be exhibit fundamentals with the end product being a written exhibit plan. The dates for the course are set for Feb. 7 through March 18, 2011 and the cost is \$475. The course is self-paced, with the instructor hosting virtual office hours. If you are interested you should sign up as soon as possible. To register:

http://www.collectioncare.org/training/trol_classes_ak106.html

Title: AK 106 Exhibit Fundamentals: Ideas to Installation

Description:

Nearly every museum develops exhibits, but how can we improve communication with visitors while taking care of our objects? Exhibit Fundamentals explores exhibits from idea to final installation in a variety of settings. Topics include exhibit theory, the role of the museum's mission, creating a timeline, accessibility and script writing. Also covered are design elements, installation techniques, object safety and security, visitor safety and evaluations. Each student develops an exhibit plan for his or her museum.

Course Outline

1. Introduction: Exhibition Theory and the Museums Mission
2. Intellectual and Physical Accessibility & Exhibition Evaluations
3. Creating a Timeline and Writing Texts
4. The Role of Design Elements and Basic Installation Techniques
5. Object and Visitor Safety
6. Conclusion

Logistics:

Participants in Exhibit Fundamentals work at their own pace through six sections and interact through online chats. Instructor Lin Nelson-Mayson is available at scheduled times during the course for email support. Exhibit Fundamentals includes online literature, slide lectures and student-teacher/group-teacher dialog. The course is limited to 20 participants.

Required texts are:

(1) *The Manual of Museum Exhibits*. Lord, Barry and Gail Dexter. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press (A Division of Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc), 2002.

(2) *Exhibit Labels: An Interpretive Approach*. Serrell, Beverly. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 1996.

(N.B. both are good all-around reference resources. If you don't already have them in your library, they can be ordered on line from Alta Mira at <http://www.altamirapress.com/>)

Free IMLS Connecting to Collections Webinars (previously recorded)

<http://learningtimesevents.org/c2c/>

Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC) has several online learning opportunities.

Preservation 101 (free)

<http://unfacilitated.preservation101.org/loggedin.asp> These go-at-your-own-pace learning opportunities deal mainly with paper-based collections but are good primers for preservation in general. Online webinars are available in January and February

Live Webinars:

<http://www.nedcc.org/education/training.calendar.php>

Care and Handling of Books

January 19, 2011

Live online webinar

2:00 pm Eastern (2 hrs)

\$95

Registration deadline: January 18, 2011

Maximum class size: 24

Class level: Beginner

Instructor: Donia Conn, NEDCC Workshop Program and Reference Coordinator

Location: Live online webinar

This live, online webinar will cover the issues to be addressed in order to provide the best level of care for your book collections. The webinar will cover the nature of materials, agents of deterioration, safe handling and storage practices, and protective enclosures available for your more fragile items.

Who should attend?

This introductory webinar is designed for those new to library collections care or those with private or family collections.

Care and Handling of Scrapbooks

January 25, 2011

Live online webinar

2:00 pm Eastern (2 hrs)

\$95 / \$80 early-bird registration (January 4, 2011)

Registration deadline: January 24, 2011

Maximum class size: 24

Class level: Beginner

Instructor: Donia Conn, NEDCC Workshop Program and Reference Coordinator

Location: Live online webinar

This live, online webinar will cover the issues to be addressed in order to provide the best level of care for scrapbook collections. The webinar introduces the structure of scrapbooks, types of materials commonly found in them, methods of attachment, and the implications for preservation and conservation. Low-cost, in-house preservation approaches are discussed.

Who should attend?

This introductory webinar is designed for those new to library collections care or those with private or family collections.

Care and Handling of Documents

February 15, 2011

Live online webinar

2:00 pm Eastern (2 hrs)

\$95 / \$80 early-bird registration (January 25, 2011)

Registration deadline: February 14, 2011

Maximum class size: 24

Class level: Beginner

Instructor: Donia Conn, NEDCC Workshop Program and Reference Coordinator

Location: Live online webinar

This live, online webinar will cover the issues to be addressed in order to provide the best level of care for archival collections. The webinar introduces the structure and deterioration of paper, writing and printing inks, safe handling of fragile and brittle documents, and proper housing and storage.

Who should attend?

This introductory webinar is designed for those new to archives or those with private or family collections.

REGISTER NOW

Care and Handling of Oversize Paper Artifacts

February 22, 2011

Live online webinar

2:00 pm Eastern (2 hrs)

\$95 / \$80 early-bird registration (February 1, 2011)

Registration deadline: February 21, 2011

Maximum class size: 24

Class level: Beginner

Instructor: Donia Conn, NEDCC Workshop Program and Reference Coordinator

Location: Live online webinar

This live, online webinar will cover the preservation of oversize works on paper and other supports commonly found in archival collections. Typical examples of such works are architectural plans, posters, and wall maps. Their history and production are discussed with a focus on the different ways they age. Strategies for safely handling, transporting, and storing these works are presented.

Who should attend?

This introductory webinar is designed for those who work with oversize paper objects in libraries, archives, or museums.

LAMP Light

The State Division of Library, Archives, and Museums is in the planning process for a new facility to store, exhibit, better care for and provide better access to its collections. Progress on the Library Archive and Museum Project can be found here

<http://www.alaskalamp.blogspot.com/>

Alaska Museum Day Film Reminder

The Alaska State Museum will be organizing an Alaska Museum Day celebration on May 14 2011. We would like for as many Alaskan museums to participate as possible. The plan is to collect short self produced videos from museums around the state and show them on our Science on a Sphere projection system in our museum all day on the 14. There will also be a link to the compilation on our website and the Museums Alaska website. Anyone who submits a video will also get a DVD of the compilation to show in their museum on May 14. We may even do an Elluminate chat session running the program.

So here's what you need to do to participate. Shoot a video of your museum inside, outside, favorite exhibit, favorite artifact, whatever. Don't worry about the audio; there will be a title line at the bottom describing each clip and we may do a voice over or music in the background. Send a short paragraph of the particulars, when, where, what is being filmed. Mini-DV is preferred but it can be in any format and it should be between 5 and 10 minutes long. You should shoot it in as high a resolution as possible. We may edit them if we get lots of submissions. Submit by March 1, 2011.

This is a great way to let your institution be shown and participate in a statewide museum project.

Standard in Excellence Program (StEPs)

You have heard about it, now is the time to sign up. This is the flagship standards program from the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH). In February, ASM Museum Services will be launching The Alaska Specific StEPs group. There will be coordinated efforts and creative ideas to help in the effort to achieve higher standards. To sign up, go to the StEPs page of the AASLH website

<http://www.aaslh.org/steps.htm>

Also from StEPs:

AASLH, with support from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, is pleased to announce that registration is open for the winter series of StEPs Webinars, the latest installment in the StEPs program (Standards and Excellence Program for History Organizations).

The webinars are free of charge to staff and volunteers of museums, historic houses, historical societies, sites, and related organizations.

These highly interactive webinars will connect you with experts and colleagues to discuss issues of common concern, ranging from strategic planning, collection policies, and fundraising. All three webinars are open to AASLH members and nonmembers. Webinar topics and materials are supported by standards and recommendations from the StEPs program.

You may sign up for the series or select only the sessions of most interest to you. The deadline to register for any session is one day before the live webinar. Please feel free to pass this information on to colleagues who might be interested.

Register for the free webinars at <http://www.aaslhnetwork.org/steps2011/>

Professional Time Wasting on the Web

Talk about local history. From sprockets to rockets, this link takes you to the Deke Slayton Memorial Space and Bicycle Museum in Sparta Wisconsin!

<http://www.dekeslaytonmuseum.com/>

Thinking about moving into social media? Read this first:

Museum 2.0: What Happens When Great Art Meets New Media. By Arianne Huffington
“Every era has to reinvent the project of ‘spirituality’ for itself,” wrote Susan Sontag in “The Aesthetics of Silence.” And in our digital era, museums offer one of the most fertile grounds for that reinvention.” To read the whole article, go to http://www.huffingtonpost.com/arianna-huffington/museums-20-what-happens-w_b_801372.html

On the importance of keeping your inventories current:

Historic Preservation & Lost Artifacts in Harrisburg by Gerald Huesken Jr.

“According to the article, over 1,800 historic artifacts (including a musket from Gettysburg battlefield, an original Kentucky rifle from the 1700’s, and an early likeness of Pennsylvania native and frontier legend Daniel Boone) have gone missing from an end of the year audit at the State Museum in Harrisburg and the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania in Lancaster County.”

To read the whole article:

<http://www.examiner.com/history-in-harrisburg/historic-preservation-lost-artifacts-harrisburg>

On the somewhat morbid side:

‘Dr. Death’ Wants to Exhibit His Own Corpse Der Spiegel Online

“Gunther von Hagens, the German anatomist famous for his “Body Worlds” shows of preserved corpses, has told a German newspaper that he is suffering from Parkinson’s disease. He is preparing to become an exhibit himself, he said.”

<http://www.spiegel.de/international/zeitgeist/0,1518,737461,00.html>