

ASM Bulletin 52

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ASM Wins Ross Merrill Award

The Alaska State Museum received the 2012 joint American Institute for Conservation / Heritage Preservation's Ross Merrill Award for Outstanding Commitment to the Preservation and Care of Collections. The awards committee called the museum "simply stellar" in the care of its own collections and those of other institutions in the State of Alaska through its ambitious conservation outreach programs since 1976.

National awards are more than just a pat on the back for good work. They are a tool for your allies outside the museum field to leverage resources and support for your institution to meet its mission. Administrators, bureaucrats, managers, friends groups, board members, voters and politicians need sound-bite ready data to go to bat for your museum operations and programming. What better ammunition than the approval of a nationally-recognized professional organization? Just ask the Pratt Museum in Homer, who won the National Medal for Museum Service <http://www.ims.gov/about/medals.aspx> from the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services in 2005, or the Juneau-Douglas City Museum who won the Award of Merit <http://www.aaslh.org/cgi-bin/awards.cgi> from the American Association for State and Local History in 2006 and again in 2011. The good work you do may well be invisible to folks who would like to support you. Many museums don't realize that self-nomination is not only encouraged for these awards, but the nominee is typically the only entity who really knows enough about the organization to fill out the paperwork. Perhaps the most important aspect of filling out a nomination for a national award is soliciting letters of support for the institution. The Alaska State Museum was grateful for more than 30 letters of support for its Ross Merrill award nomination from museums across Alaska and even in the lower 48. Wonder what a successful nomination looks like?

The following is an excerpt from the nomination package for the ASM:

For more than three decades, ASM has undertaken the leadership role in Alaska for preservation and care of collections. ASM has led not only by example but also by direct assistance to more than 80

museums and cultural centers scattered around this vast but thinly populated state. This assistance has taken the form of site visits, conservation assessments, technical advice, analytical and treatment services, preventive conservation and collections care workshops, funding for conservation projects, loans of preservation equipment, facilitating conservation internships, publications, and connecting Alaska to conservation trends and services in the lower 48. Today, Alaska has an all-time high of three AIC-affiliated conservators. Two of them work for the Alaska State Museum, which is remarkable considering the museum only has eleven full time staff members.

THE CHALLENGE OF ALASKA

Many extremes describe Alaska: remote, vast, sparsely populated, ruggedly individualistic, and culturally diverse. The distance from Juneau to Barrow is about the same as from New York City to Orlando, Florida. Only four cities have a population greater than 10,000. The recurring preservation needs most frequently noted by the Alaska State Museum are:

- Need for improved collections storage
- Need for improved exhibition standards
- Care for individual items of special significance to the community



2009 damage to the Eagle Historical Museum from an ice jam on the Yukon



Home of the future Tenakee Museum.

Collections Storage Challenges



ASM head curator Bob Banghart discusses crawlspace storage at the Pratt Museum in Homer, 2010.



Overcrowded, unorganized storage in a fledgling small museum.



Collections storage at theYupit Piciryarit Museum in Bethel in 2003 before internship



Collections storage in Bethel after work by Conservation intern Dana Senge in 2004

Exhibition Challenges



Wire barriers obscure exhibitions in an attempt to protect them in Palmer



Dogsled suspended from ceiling and muskox at Palmer Museum and Visitor's Center, Palmer



2008 "Before" shot of exhibit at the Native Museum in Fairbanks



2009 "After" shot of exhibit at the Native Museum in Fairbanks (recipient of Grant in Aid)

Individual Treasures



Conservator Dana Senge leads community condition reporting and cleaning of rare three-holed bidarka (Skin covered kayak) at the Baranof Museum, Kodiak in 2007



Scott Carrlee works with a local carpenter to install a Chilkat Robe at the Sheldon Museum in Haines, 2008

Commitment to Preservation

The Alaska State Museum was the first institution of any kind in the state of Alaska to create a staff position for a professional conservator. The position was created in 1976 through grant initiatives, and then made a part of the permanent staff. To put this in perspective, the mid-70s was a time when only a small number of professional conservators had graduated from any kind of training program (approximately 110 individuals according to the AIC Committee on Educational Affairs, 1977). AIC was only four years old with fewer than 700 individual members (Source: AIC Strategic Plan February 1990). Many large institutions nationwide had only just begun to differentiate conservation from general collections management. ASM was at the forefront, especially for museums not dedicated solely to fine arts. From the beginning, the ASM conservator was seen as a state resource committed to serving a constituency beyond just the state museum's own collection. One could say outreach and assistance to smaller institutions is part of its DNA, since the ASM's mission first written in 1900 states that "ASM assists and advises in the development of museums throughout Alaska."

In a 1976 letter, the director of the Anchorage Museum wrote:

"It would appear that of the three major museums in Alaska, the Alaska State Museum alone has the capabilities to serve the entire state. The Anchorage Museum is municipally funded and is designed to serve the people in the Greater Anchorage area. The University Museum is research oriented and serves primarily as an educational institution. Of necessity then, the responsibility for meeting small museums' needs through the state must fall under the aegis of the State Museum."

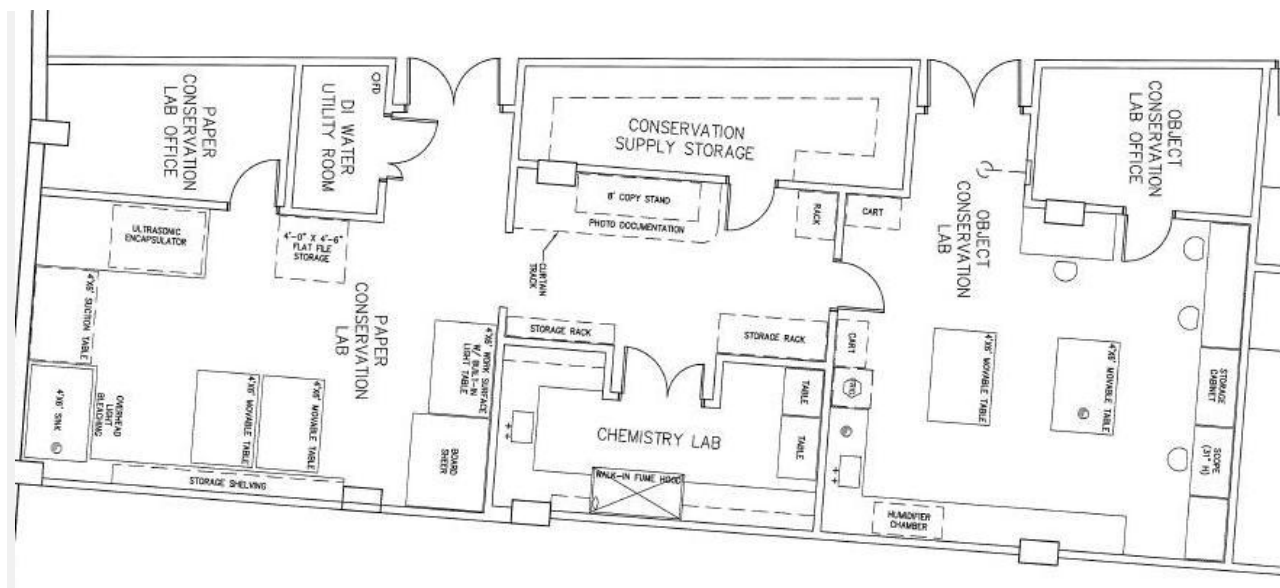
This continues to be the case today. The Anchorage Museum, with a staff of more than 50, created the only other conservation position in Alaska in 2007. Conservator Monica Shah also serves as the director of collections and is able to perform limited outreach beyond the needs of her busy institution. The Museum of the North, affiliated with the University of Alaska's flagship Fairbanks campus, has a staff of over 30 but has never had a staff conservator. Only six other institutions in the

state have five or more full-time staff members. The remaining 70+ museums fall into the Heritage Health Index categories of “small” or “medium” sized institutions.

Sustained Institutional Commitment Internally

Over the years, even through difficult financial times, ASM has been successful at keeping a conservator on staff. Each one of them has been kept busy with a rigorous schedule of conserving the museum’s collections as well as statewide outreach duties. In 2006, Head Curator (Director) Bruce Kato moved conservator Scott Carrlee into the museum’s main outreach position, curator of museum services, where he could provide conservation outreach and advocacy on a full-time basis. Kato then hired Ellen Carrlee to the conservator position.

The museum is currently in the design phase of a building project, where more than \$10 million has been spent in the development of a new unified State Library, Archives, and Museum building. The new building, with an estimated completion date of 2015, will house an expanded objects conservation lab and a paper conservation lab (a first for the state). The project has contracted with a professional lab designer and facilitated consultations with paper conservators to design labs that will continue the ASM’s commitment to preservation and expand the outreach into libraries and archives as well. The construction of these conservation labs will mark the first time new construction has included purpose-built conservation facilities anywhere in the state.



2011 plans for the new conservation labs: ECI/ Hoyer architects, laboratory design by the Estimé Group, paper conservation advising from Deb Evans of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco

Sustained Institutional Commitment Externally

The institutional belief in conservation runs deep at the ASM, and support has been from the top-down. Since 1976, the ASM head curators (directors) have supported conservation as a fundamental part of museum activities and promoted the museum’s conservation expertise as one of the jewels in its crown. The exhibits department staff is knowledgeable, skilled, and most importantly, sensitive to conservation principles from case construction materials to proper artifact mounts and light levels. Temperature and relative humidity have been recorded since 1983, and IPM logs have been kept since 1990. Oddly, testing of sample construction materials began in the 1980s. Collections staff

hold a deep sensitivity to the ethics of conservation in collaborative treatment decision-making and storage protocols consulting with tribal care takers when appropriate. The Museum Protection and Visitor Services team members consider themselves the front line against plants, pests, and food entering the museum. Conservation staff is always at the table in exhibition planning, acquisitions, and loan decisions. With a new unified facility on the horizon, ASM staff has spread the word about environmental monitoring to the state library and archive. 125 pest traps are now set at five different sites, along with a dozen PEM2 dataloggers. Library and Archive staff are now trained to monitor temperature, RH, and pests quarterly and report to the ASM conservator for advice and support. The ASM conservator also chairs a division-wide monthly committee meeting on emergency preparedness. Conservation concerns are the vanguard of integration for the new building.

While the collections care at the Alaska State Museum is excellent, it is the outreach and advocacy aspects of the museum's activities that are outstanding and the basis of this nomination for the Ross Merrill award. The Alaska State Museum's Outreach Program includes both site visits and phone/email consultations. The latter average 2 or 3 contacts per day for a total about over 800 consults per year. The ASM Outreach Program also loans collections care equipment such as a Nilfisk HEPA vacuum, blue wool fade cards, dataloggers, humidity indicator cards, and UV and visible light meters so that small museums can monitor and improve their preservation environments.



Scott Carrlee with light meter at Baranof Museum, Kodiak



Scott Carrlee, licensed in asbestos abatement, uses his training to assist in decontamination of paintings at the Pioneer Museum in Fairbanks in 2010



Volunteers for 2011 Museums Alaska Angels project make up artifact labeling kits at the Whitney Museum in Valdez



ASM curator of exhibits Paul Gardinier teaches a mount making workshop at the Alutiiq Museum in Kodiak, 2008

Exemplary Model

Four initiatives at the Alaska State Museum might serve as exemplary models to others, particularly conservators working at institutions in remote areas such as Western states or even abroad.

Grant-In-Aid Program: Since 1981, the ASM has administered the Grant-In-Aid program (GIA) as a way to award funding from the State Legislature to needy museums and cultural centers. Since its inception, more than \$3 million has been awarded to Alaskan museums and cultural centers with much of the funding going towards collections care and conservation-related activities. Often the grant requests come as a direct follow-up from a CAP or MAP survey or from the advice of the ASM staff. This grant is often used to leverage funds from other sources such as private foundations or federal funding.



Scott Carrlee (center) assists with exhibit case installation following conservation treatment for Iditarod champion and husky breed foundation stud "Fritz" at the Carrie McLain Museum in Nome, 2008



2011 exhibition case upgrade at the Sam Fox Museum in Dillingham

Internship Programs: With a conservator in the outreach position, the ASM pursued grant funding from the Institute for Museums and Library Services (IMLS) for a 21st century Museum Professionals grant to place graduate-level museums studies and conservation students as interns in remote museums statewide. The internship program utilized ASM's expertise to recruit, vet, and mentor the interns, filling the gap which often prevented small museums from using interns to provide much-needed expertise. After the initial three years of grant funding, the internship program continues through state funding as a separate program of the GIA. In addition to this program, the ASM conservation lab has hosted more than a dozen conservation graduate students. These relationships have led to additional contract jobs for several conservators after graduation, and a few interns have even taken permanent positions in Alaskan museums.



Conservation intern Fran Ritchie with collections storage upgrades at the Baranof Museum in Kodiak, 2011



Conservation intern Samantha Springer (seated) advises on the care of family heirlooms at a 2007 public program at the Sheldon Jackson Museum

Electronic Outreach: In a state as vast as Alaska, with most institutions off the road system, the internet has proven to be an excellent tool for connecting museums with preservation information. In 1998 the ASM established the first museum-related electronic listserv in the state as an effort to connect with small museums and provide a forum for information sharing. Ellen Carrlee's conservation weblog (<http://ellencarrlee.wordpress.com/>), established in 2007, now has 83 conservation-related posts and more than 75,000 hits. *The Alaska Fur ID* website (<http://alaskafurid.wordpress.com/>), was established in 2009 with conservation intern Lauren Horelick, and *What's That White Stuff*, (<http://alaskawhitestuffid.wordpress.com/>) followed in August 2011 with conservation intern Crista Pack. In 2009, Scott Carrlee began a monthly online Museum Chat (<http://www.museums.state.ak.us/ASMChat.html>), with approximately a dozen participants each session. The chat provides small museums in Alaska with direct access to a conservator on a regular basis to answer preservation, collections care, and other museum-related questions. The sessions are recorded for future use and a transcript of the written chat is sent out to every museum via the listserv. In 2010 the ASM Bulletin (founded as a quarterly publication in 1996) went from paper to electronic (<http://museumbulletin.wordpress.com/>), and increased frequency, reaching approximately 150 monthly subscribers. "Ask ASM," a recurring column of the

ASM Bulletin, functions as a kind of “Dear Abby” for museums and often carries collections care advice in addition to the Bulletin’s frequent preservation-oriented feature articles.



In 2011, Ellen Carrlee collaborated with conservator Ron Sheetz on a weblog posting for the maintenance of totem poles which has proven popular both nationally and internationally. They are treating the Governor’s totem pole



Ron Sheetz is applying Bora-Care to the YaxTe pole in Auke Bay



Ellen collaborated with head curator (director) Bob Banghart (foreground) to write weblog postings on taking down totem poles and proper mounting techniques



Banghart has been involved in rigging and moving numerous totem poles in Southeast Alaska

Empowerment of Collections Caretakers: Since the inception of the conservation program at the ASM, there has been a philosophy of empowering collections caretakers to perform preventive maintenance and collections care themselves, with the knowledge that they could call the ASM anytime for advice and support. When possible, caretakers are guided step-by-step through procedures or activities. Preservation equipment is available for loan through the ASM environmental monitoring kit. When needs are beyond the abilities of local staff, the ASM has coordinated to bring conservation expertise from the lower 48, often through the auspices of the Grant-in-Aid program. To keep a finger on the pulse of statewide museum needs, ASM staff performs an average of 25 site visits annually. The ASM has been a presence at the statewide Museums Alaska conference every year since its incorporation in 1983, often providing training and workshops in preservation and collections care as well as underwriting part of the conference through the GIA program.



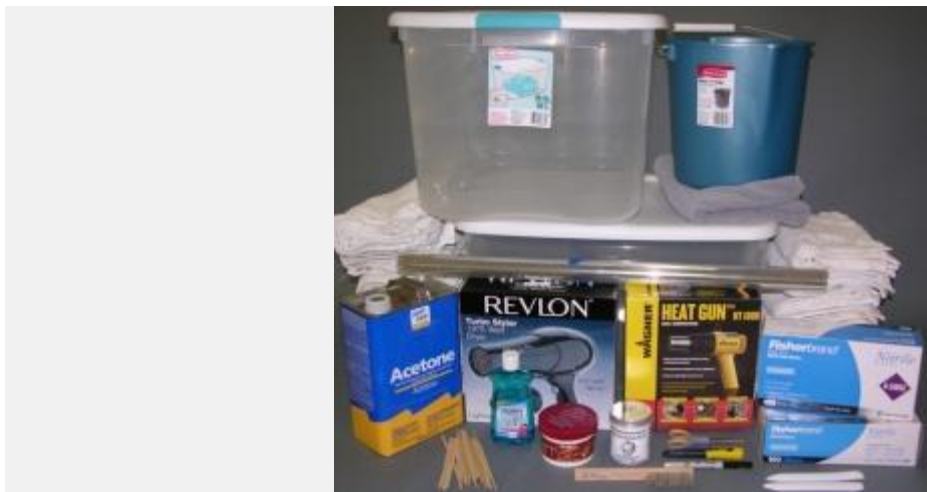
Exhibit designer Paul Gardinier teaches a mannequin making workshop at the Alaska State Museum during the 2006 Museums Alaska conference



Participants learn the Beilstein Test for chlorides in order to determine appropriate storage housings during a 2009 photo preservation workshop by conservator Jennifer McGlinchey

COMMUNITY UNDERSTANDING AND INVOLVEMENT

In addition to the outreach activities to museums and cultural centers listed above, the ASM strives to connect all its constituents to conservation information. One example has been the recent sustained efforts to increase conservation awareness among archaeologists. ASM conservator Ellen Carrlee participated in a panel discussion of “Curation Concerns” at the 2009 Alaska Anthropological Association Conference. The demand for a labeling adhesive more user-friendly than B-72 was relayed to the AIC Objects Specialty Group, and Ellen undertook a project with Anna Weiss (conservation graduate student at Queen’s University) and Samantha Springer (assistant objects conservator at the Cleveland Museum of Art) to test alternate adhesives that archaeologists wanted to use. Results were brought to the 2010 Alaska Anthropological Association Conference, and posted online in 2011. Since then, information requests from archaeologists in the state have increased.



Polishing kit designed for the Russian Orthodox Church in Juneau in conjunction with the 2009 WAAC Angels project. Kit and instruction on “How to Polish Liturgical Brass” were posted online. Materials for the kit were paid for through the AIC Regional Angels grant written by Scott Carrlee



Bob Banghart and Ellen Carrlee working on conservation and mount making of an archaeological fish trap in a public gallery at the Alaska State Museum. The project was presented at the AIC conference in 2005 and won an AASLH “wow” award for the Juneau-Douglas City Museum

Local outreach to the community includes such activities as the ASM winter brown bag lecture series, which always features a conservation presentation and conservation treatments in progress displayed in public galleries, such as the Montana Creek Fish Trap project and the conservation of shipwreck artifacts from the Torrent. The ASM has also been involved in many Angels projects in conjunction with various conferences statewide. Angels projects led by conservators have included labeling artifacts, polishing liturgical brass, and moving collections.



Connecting collections to communities is multi-directional. On the left, Tlingit/Haida weaver Janice Criswell assists in the cleaning and analysis of a 4,500-year-old waterlogged basket in the ASM conservation lab.



Jan teaches preparation of basketry materials and weaving to conservation intern Samantha Springer. The two were among the co-authors of a paper about basketry preservation and cultural sensitivity presented at the ICOM-CC Triennial in New Delhi, India,

2007

PROFESSIONAL CONSERVATORS

Mary Pat Wyatt (ASM conservator 1976-1980) Mary Pat had been the curator of collections at the Anchorage Museum from 1972-75. Following 10 months' training at the Smithsonian's Anthropology Conservation Lab with Bethune Gibson, Mary Pat pursued grant funding (NEH and NMA) for a state conservation lab and found it a home at the Alaska State Museum. At the time, Alaska had fewer than 20 museums. She was involved in the seminal activities of the Totem Rescue Project which resulted in the establishment of the Ketchikan Totem Heritage Center. She wrote a National Museum Act grant to bring four conservators to Alaska in the summer of 1978: Alice Hoveman, Melba Myers, Susan Paterson and Thurid Clark. She resigned in 1979 after connecting with more than 40 institutions statewide, in order to complete her MA thesis, "Problems in Conservation of Alaskan Ethnographic Material."

Alice Hoveman (ASM conservator 1980-1986) Trained in the George Washington University conservation program under Carolyn Rose. Alice was responsible for the publication of the *Conservation Wise Guide* (http://www.museums.state.ak.us/documents/wise_guide.pdf) in 1985. This publication can be found on the shelf of nearly every museum and library in Alaska and is available online in PDF format. Alice led the three-year cleanup of the ASM's collections after a violent boiler explosion caused much of the collection to be contaminated with soot. As an indicator of how long ago this was, it was under Alice's tenure that smoking was banned in the Museum(!) Alice also helped facilitate conservation work in Alaska by paper conservator Deborah Seibel, sculpture conservators Bob Marti and Phoebe Weil, and collaborated with CCI scientists on totem pole care in British Columbia. She was part of the team that oversaw new exhibits and storage created for the Sheldon Jackson Museum when it became part of the ASM in the mid-1980's.

Helen Alten (ASM conservator 1989-1994) A graduate of the Institute of Archaeology, London program and AIC Professional Associate, Helen's achievements in the position included state-of-the-art training workshops in basketry repair delivered directly to museum staff and Native basket weavers. These three-day workshops, held in 1991 and 1992, brought in such heavy hitters as Mary-Lou Florian and Dale Kronkright. Helen headed up the Save Outdoor Sculpture efforts for the State of Alaska. It was under Helen's tenure that Integrated Pest Management was established at the ASM, and from there spread to institutions statewide. Helen brought conservation interns Renee Jones and Maria Sullivan to Alaska in 1993 for summer projects in Juneau.

Brook Bowman (ASM conservator 1996-1999) Brook's most lasting legacy was the development of the ASM's emergency preparedness capacity and spreading that training statewide. One of the most popular hands-on trainings ever offered at the Museums Alaska conference was her so-called "Hindsight Museum" disaster, where participants had to grapple with a mock fire and flood scenario including thrift store "artifacts" and participation from the local fire and police departments. Brook also was the first ASM conservator to interface with wood conservator Ron Sheetz, furthering the ASM's role in providing totem pole maintenance advice begun by Mary Pat Wyatt and later continued by the Carrlees. Brook also conducted 10 site visits to museums in Alaska during her tenure as ASM conservator.

Scott Carrlee (ASM conservator 2000- 2006; ASM curator of museum services 2006- present) Scott has an MA in art conservation from Buffalo State University and is an AIC Fellow. As president of the Western Association for Art Conservation (WAAC) in 2009, he brought the organization's annual conference to Juneau. Scott's greatest contributions to conservation in Alaska have been his outreach efforts. In the past ten years, Scott has visited 67 of the 80 museums in Alaska, many of them multiple times. A gregarious personality, Scott's reputation as an accessible and helpful resource led to his 2011 award for Excellence in the Museum Profession by the Museums Alaska organization. Recognizing that small museums didn't need another daunting to-do list, but rather a skilled person to help get the work done, Scott initiated the outreach internship program. Scott is an advocate of the Standards in Excellence Program put for by the American Association of State and Local History (AASLH) which makes national museum standards accessible for small institutions. He is one of only a handful of conservators who regularly attend AASLH annual meetings.

Ellen Carrlee (ASM Conservator 2006- present) A graduate of the NYU conservation training program and AIC professional associate, Ellen honed her sensitivity to small museums as the curator of collections and exhibits at the Juneau-Douglas City Museum for five years. The presence of two conservators on staff at the ASM allowed Ellen to refocus on internal collections needs, and she has undertaken surveys of the basketry and natural history collections, as well as research into PEG protocols for the waterlogged archaeological basketry (research that has been published through AIC and WOAM with co-author Dana Senge, who was herself a conservation intern in Alaska as a student). Ellen's outreach activities have included the creation of online resources and efforts to connect with the archaeological community. Ellen has brought conservation interns Samantha Springer, Molly Gleeson, Lauren Horelick, Siobhan Coop, and Crista Pack to Alaska for conservation internships, and conservators Dave Harvey (metals) and Catherine Hawks (natural history) for consultations.

"Outside" Conservation Expertise

In Alaska, the lower 48 is colloquially called "outside." Scott has brought conservation interns Dana Senge, Lara Kaplan, Jennifer Dennis, Jennifer McGlinchey and Fran Richie to work at institutions around the state. He also facilitated the work of conservators Grace White, Seth Irwin, Dave Harvey, Carmen Bria, and Cathy Hawks in Alaska. Two of these in particular, paper conservators Grace White and Seth Irwin, were brought up through grant funding that Scott helped procure, and worked at 18 different institutions with paper conservation needs. It is the demand for the paper and photo expertise that will lead to a permanent paper conservation position at the Alaska State Museum. In 2009, with Scott as its president, the Western Association for Art Conservation held its annual meeting in Juneau marking the northern most venue for their meetings. The meeting was remarkable not only for the fact that over 40 conservators ventured to the far north, and 10 of them participated in an AIC funded Angels project at the local Russian Orthodox Church, but for disaster response at the State Archives as well.



Conservator Dana Senge works with Ellen Lester on a mannequin for a gutskin parka at the Baranof Museum in Kodiak. The project was ASM grant funded in 2010



Paintings conservators D. Hays Shoop and Camilla VanVooren from WCCFA assess the condition of icons at the Russian Orthodox Church in Juneau during the 2009 WAAC Angels project.



Paper conservator Seth Irwin teaching a tear repair workshop in Anchorage, 2010

IN-HOUSE COLLECTIONS CARE AT THE ALASKA STATE MUSEUMS

The ASM has been AAM accredited since 1975. When the conservation program began in 1976, collections were stored on open wooden shelves. Subsequent grants, cabinet upgrades, and improvements to storage mounts spearheaded by the museum's conservators follow the trajectory typical of professional museums nationwide. 90% of our on-site storage is now in powder coated and gasketed museum cabinets, hanging on rolling art racks, or kept in a custom-built unit for framed artwork. In 2007, the Museum acquired off-site climate controlled storage for oversized

collections, which allowed proper store of large items such as watercraft and industrial artifacts that had been always been on long-term loan to distant institutions with less-than-ideal facilities. Long-range and short-range (fiscal year) plans written by the conservator have driven much of the collections care at the ASM since 1976. All decisions involving artifacts have involved the conservator. The new museum building will include three times the storage area and state of the art climate control.



Scott Carrlee with rolled textile, Alaska State Museum 2009



Modu-Panel art racks for storage of fine art, two particularly delicate paintings covered with custom Tyvek envelopes. Alaska State Museum, 2010



Curator Rosemary Carlton, collections inventory at the Sheldon Jackson Museum, Sitka 2008



Thorne River Basket, c. 5,450 years old. The first of many waterlogged baskets treated at the ASM since 1995, with collaborative research presented and published by Ellen Carrlee and Dana Senge (WOAM 2009, AIC 2009)

SUMMARY

The Alaska State Museum (founded 1900) and the Sheldon Jackson Museum (established 1888 and added to the ASM system in 1986) are the two oldest museum collections in Alaska. The establishment of a conservation program in 1976 was pioneering for the period, and has penetrated every aspect of the Museum's activities. But it is truly the conservation outreach activities of the museum that are of national significance, serving some of the most remote and vulnerable collections in the country. This outreach program contributes to the lifeblood of a statewide museum network and establishes conservation as a primary force for collections care.

When the 2005 Heritage Health Index report was released, it was a nationwide wakeup call to many that collections were in need. The four recommendations of the report are aligned with the principles that have guided the ongoing efforts in Alaska.

1. Commitment to safe conditions for collections: The ASM outreach program stresses that good collections care is a continuum; artifacts indoors are better protected than outdoors, on a shelf is better than on a floor, and in acid-free housing is better than exposed on a shelf. It is this incremental, step-by-step raising of the level of collections care that is one of the proudest accomplishments of the Alaska State Museum and remains the focus of much of the outreach work still taking place.

2. **Emergency Planning:** The ASM holds frequent workshops on emergency planning and emphasizes the Incident Command System. When disasters strike, the ASM provides expertise for recovery of collections and leverages anecdotal information from incidents to aid in future preparedness. In 2009, a storm tore off the roof of the State Archive and flooded collections causing damage to more than 1500 linear feet of state archival documents. There were five paper conservators in town for the WAAC annual meeting who pitched in to guide the recovery effort. By the time the meeting was over more than half of the attendees had helped out with the recovery one way or another. As one of the risk managers for the state remarked “it was like having a heart attack at a cardiologist’s convention!” Ellen Carrlee’s blog posting titled “Anatomy of an Archives Flood” (<http://ellencarrlee.wordpress.com/2009/10/13/anatomy-of-an-archives-flood/>) garnered national praise and led to Ellen presenting on a panel for an AAM / AIC- sponsored disaster preparedness webinar with more than 500 participants.



Emergency response to save soaked archival collections in Juneau, 2009



Recovery efforts spearheaded by conservators who came for the 2009 WAAC conference held in Juneau

1. Assigning Responsibility for Collections Care: In the 1970s and 80s, much of ASM's preservation outreach efforts involved getting collections out of harm's way and connecting caretakers without training to resources for building collections care skills. That fundamental work is still ongoing in Alaska, but has given rise to the recognition in museums built in the last decade and current building campaigns that collections care must be designed in from the outset.
2. Individuals Assume Responsibility to Leverage Support: The ASM leads the charge in communicating a strong preservation message, puts boots on the ground to help get it done, and even helps put money into budgets to make it happen. Site visits, skilled interns to assist in collections care, imported conservation expertise from the lower 48, electronic listservs and chats, blogs, publications, the annual museum conference, workshops, and grants all serve to emphasize the message that collections care is important and *possible*.

Nationwide, but especially in Alaska, there is a dire need for collections care and preservation expertise to be delivered to local institutions closest to the people. In Alaska, this recognition is at the heart of ASM's preservation outreach strategy. This message of accessibility and relevance to even the smallest and most remote of collections is vitally important. The collections are important because they are important to people, and when museum professionals connect with and understand the needs and challenges facing the people, collections care can happen from the ground up.



Duncan Cottage Museum at the Tsimshian Reservation in Metlakatla, founded in 1972. participant in on-site assessment and museum internship program. Before the grand re-opening in 2010, few of the Tsimshian people would engage with the museum because of its association with a repressive past. Now it is seen as a place of healing and rebirth for their culture



Port Alexander Museum, recipient of Grant in Aid funds, museum intern, database training, numerous phone and email contacts. Majority of the community is pictured here at the grand opening 2010

Ask ASM

Question: We have a textile that may have an insect infestation. We would like to freeze it but are afraid to because it has metal wrapped threads on it. Would it be ok to freeze it?

ASM: The research on low temperature treatment generally suggests most materials are safe in the freezer if they are properly packaged (i.e. in a sealed plastic bag with materials inside like tissue paper to control the amount of RH.) Metals could certainly have trouble if they are not kept in a bag following cold treatment for a day or so. Condensation will form on the outside of the bag as it returns to room temperature, and if the bag is not present or is breached the condensation could form on the surface of the metal, promoting corrosion.

Here's a link to a low temperature treatment article:

<http://cool.conservation-us.org/jaic/articles/jaic42-02-002.html>

In the specific case of metal threads, the layer of metal is very thin and therefore you might be concerned there is not much room for error. In this case, an alternate regimen of isolation and monitoring if you are unsure if you have an infestation might be the safest solution. Inspection with a flashlight and magnifying glass including the creases, seams and folds ought to reveal if there are insect parts, wings, legs, larval casings, webbing, cocoons or the like. If you find anything definitively dead and old, remove the debris to allow future monitoring. Either way, you would keep the artifact bagged for several weeks or even a couple of months to see if anything hatched out. Eggs are nearly impossible to be certain about their absence in a visual inspection. Repeat inspection after allowing for the hatching-out period.

If you know for sure you have an infestation, you should weigh the known threat to the textile from infestation against the hypothetical/potential risk to the threads and err on the side of undergoing a low temperature treatment.

Shaking the Money Tree

CAP

97 Museums Will Participate in Conservation Assessment Program

Washington, D.C. -The Conservation Assessment Program (CAP), which assists small museums in providing appropriate care for endangered collections, has announced this year's participating museums. In 2012, 97 museums in 34 states, Guam, and the Republic of Palau will have the condition of their collections and historic structures assessed. CAP is administered by Heritage Preservation and funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services through its National Leadership Grants program.

The wide array of 2012 recipients includes the Seabee Museum & Memorial Park in North Kingstown, Rhode Island; the History of Diving Museum in Islamorada, Florida; the University of Guam Herbarium in Mangilao, Guam; the Soudan Underground Mine State Park in Soudan, Minnesota; and the Kansas African American Museum in Wichita, Kansas. To view the complete list of 2012 CAP participants, visit the [Heritage Preservation Web site](#). 2013 application to be released October 1, 2012

IMLS

FY2012 Conservation Project Support awards:

http://www.imls.gov/grant_awards_announcement_fy_2012_conservation_project_support.aspx

Draft Museum Grant Guidelines Available for Public Comment

Washington, DC—The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is seeking public comments on the draft guidelines for the FY 2013 Museums for America and National Leadership Grants for Museums programs. The guidelines for these programs have been revised to align with the [IMLS Strategic Plan](#). We are seeking comments to assess how well these guidelines accomplish the following goals:

- Make federal dollars more accessible by reducing complexity
- Increase clarity and readability
- Make it easier to see where a project idea fits best
- Make it easier to articulate the impact of project ideas
- Allow grantees greater ability to pursue comprehensive collections care projects by [combining the purposes of the current Conservation Project Support and Museums for America programs](#)
- Allow grantees greater ability to pursue professional development activities by [combining the purposes and funding for the current 21st Century Museum Professionals and National Leadership Grants for Museums programs](#)
- Provide greater ability for museums and organizations that serve museums to pursue National Leadership Grants that have broad impact for their communities and create models that can be adapted by others
- Make it possible for IMLS to continue to support the full range of museums, large and small, and representing every museum discipline and every geographic area

To see the guidelines use these links:

[Museums for America](#)

[National Leadership Grants for Museums](#)

The comment period will end on Friday, July 6, 2012. Please send comments to comments@imls.gov. Final guidelines will be posted no later than October 15, 2012.

NEH

The National Endowment for the Humanities Division of Preservation and Access is proud to announce the launch of our completely redesigned NEH website (www.neh.gov)! Besides easier access to applying for, and managing a grant, the new site will showcase featured projects, news about NEH staff, and NEH-funded online content that you can explore.

Spotlight on Grant in Aid

The deadline for project completion for FY2012 projects is rapidly approaching. All projects that were awarded last July 1 should be accomplished by this June 30th. The final accounting for these projects is due by September 30. Final accounting forms were sent out to all grant recipients May 15. Letters can be returned along with copies of invoices and receipts by email to scott.carrlee@alaska.gov and can be in MS Word or Pdf format. If you need an electronic version of the form you can find one here <http://www.museums.state.ak.us/grants.html>

Remember you will need to provide at least one photograph that represents your project in order for your final accounting to be complete. Some of these reports will be published throughout the year in this section. If your project is chosen for the "Spotlight on Grant in Aid" you will need to supply this photograph in digital format.

All applications are due by Friday June 1st. More information can be found at <http://www.museums.state.ak.us/grants.html>

Conference Reviews

American Institute for Conservation Annual Meeting

Scott Carrlee, Curator of Museum Services attended the American Institute for Conservation annual meeting May 7-12 in Albuquerque, NM. Scott participated in several workshops on Collections Emergency Response and presented during a session on conservators whose career paths have gone beyond bench work in the conservation field. He also was a team member in "The Great Debate" where the topic was "Publishing accurate and complete "how-to guides" for conservation and restoration treatments online is the best way for us to care for cultural heritage in the 21st century."

There were two other Alaskans connections at the meeting, Holly Cusack-McVeigh from the Pratt and Paper Conservator Seth Irwin (honorary Alaskan). Many of you will remember Seth from the 14 months he spent up here doing paper conservation and various museums and his workshops at museum Alaska.



Holly Cusack-McVeigh and Seth Irwin at the conference

Museum Trend: The Culturally-Specific Museum

By Ellen Carrlee

The Smithsonian Institution was founded in 1846. Today, there are 19 museums in the Smithsonian system. The National Museum of the American Indian opened on the national mall in 2004. The Museum of African American History and Culture is slated to open in Washington DC in 2014. Recently, a report to congress from the Latino commission recommended that a National Museum of the Latino be added to the Smithsonian's constellation of museums, prompting a symposium about the trend for culturally specific museums. On April 25, I listened to a live video stream of the Smithsonian's symposium "(Re)Presenting America: The Evolution of Culturally Specific Museums." A central issue was controlling the authoritative voice of what identity means. Is your museum about people just like you, or does your museum speak about other people? Both? In a nutshell, here are a few paraphrased statements:

Where are we in this storyline? Why are we forgotten / marginalized / absent?

- Who spoke for me in this timeline? Why wasn't someone from my specific culture consulted?
- Screw this, we'll never get a fair shake here. We're opening our own museum!
- I'm a hybrid of 4 different cultures...do I have to go to four different museums and piece together a whole?
- I'm American, and you're American...the history and struggles of my people impact you whether you know it or not.

The Smithsonian has put the entire symposium on YouTube, and I thought the following segments were especially worth checking out, depending on the focus of your museum work:

David Hurst Thomas spoke as a member of the anthropological and academic community about the relationship between his profession and Native Americans. If you self-identify as an anthropologist or have had to deal with one studying you, this is worth seeing. (25 minutes)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=1-BXfWbTMXc

Among the most interesting aspects of a diverse panel discussion was the importance of social networking and online presence to Asian American youth and the political/ cultural needs of Latinos as expressed by Congressman Xavier Becerra. The most intriguing ideas for me came from Lonnie Bunch, who is the director of the new National Museum of African American History and Culture. (1 hour 20 minutes)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=dcVHMeb12MI

Wayne Clough, who is the current leader of the Smithsonian, gave his impressions about the future of diversity there, and I was most interested in the changes he mentioned for the National Museum of the American Indian. (22 minutes)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=t-bwB-fggvU

Kip Fulbeck! If you watch nothing else, watch this amazing 35 minute performance by artist, poet, filmmaker, and professor Kip Fulbeck. Watch it with a co-worker, or a spouse, or a friend. You will want to talk about what you see. This was the part of the symposium that stuck with me the longest, because as we all know, art has a way of talking on many levels and making us think in a way that a direct lecture style does not.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=voZsy1boYFc&list=PLADEF599C6214F327&index=8&feature=plpp_video

For a full list of all the video clips from the conference, see the playlist <http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLADEF599C6214F327>

Alaska Museums in the News

IMLS on YouTube: Pratt Museum Explores the Science, Art, and Culture of Kachemak Bay

<http://blog.imls.gov/?p=1135>

Artist Dan DeRoux shares his history of Alaska

<http://newsminer.com/bookmark/18574281-Artist-Dan-DeRoux-shares-his-history-of-Alaska>

Grant allows State Museum to buy XRF Spectrometer

<http://juneauempire.com/art/2012-05-10/grant-allows-state-museum-buy-xrf-spectrometer#.T7vhqOVfHng>

Making art: University of Alaska Museum exhibit focuses on the creative process

[Fairbanks Daily News-Miner - Making art University of Alaska Museum exhibit focuses on the creative process](#)

Time to Preserve Alaska's History

<http://peninsulaclarion.com/opinion/2012-04-16/time-to-preserve-alaskas-history>

Professional Development/Training Opportunities

Get a World Class Education in Your Living Room!

The George Washington University's Distance Education Graduate Certificate Program in Museum Collections Management and Care application deadline is August 1, 2012.

The graduate certificate is earned completely online and is designed for those working or volunteering in museums with collections management responsibilities. The courses are ideal for those either lacking prior formal museum studies training or desiring a refresher in the topics of legal and ethical issues, collections management and preventive conservation.

For more information, please contact Mary Coughlin at musede@gwu.edu

or visit our website: <http://ccas.gwu.edu/museum>

Deaccessioning: It's Not A Four-Letter Word

Thursday, June 7, 10 – 11 am AKST (login at 9:45 a.m.)

<http://aaslhcommunity.org/office/> to attend. You only need to enter your name and city to participate.

Has anyone from your organization ever suggested that you should just throw away some of the collection to make room for new stuff? While almost every museum has some items that really shouldn't be there, deaccessioning (the process of disposing of, selling or trading objects from a museum collection) should not be undertaken lightly. Learn about the process of deaccessioning, from making the initial decision to choosing the method of disposal, and everything in between. This Small Museum Online Community Event features Anne Ackerson from the Museum Association of New York and Kathleen Byrne from the National Parks Service.

Learning Times will host this online event. If you've never participated in a Learning Times Event/Webinar, please go to <http://aaslhcommunity.org/tech-check/> right now to test your computer and ensure you can connect.

Connecting to Collections Online Community Webinars

Heritage Preservation, along with the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH), is pleased to announce the schedule for the C2C Online Community's newly-scheduled live chat events. Resources and further information on the following programs will appear in the Featured Resource section approximately a week before the event. Don't forget to mark your calendar for these upcoming chats:

- Security for Collections: Preventing Loss and Planning for Any Budget - Wednesday, May 23, 9 am AKST. Stevan P. Layne, Layne Consultants International.

- Collections Care and Conservation: How to Submit an Art Works Grant to the National Endowment for the Arts - Wednesday, June 6, 9 am AKST. Wendy Clark, Museum Specialist, National Endowment for the Arts.
- Care of Plastics - Wednesday, June 13, 9 am AKST. Christine Frohnert, Conservator of Contemporary Art, Modern Materials and Media and Odile Madden, Research Scientist, Museum Conservation Institute, Smithsonian Institution.
- Wireless Dataloggers - Tuesday, July 17, 2012, 9 am AKST. Rachael Perkins Arenstein, Partner, A.M. Art Conservation, LLC.

To join any of these webinars go to <http://www.connectingtocollections.org/meeting/>

Heritage Preservation

Heritage Preservation, in cooperation with the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), is presenting WebWise Reprise, two online events based on the IMLS WebWise 2012 conference. The first event, on June 14 at 10 am AKST, will be “Sharing Public History Work: Crowdsourcing Data.” The second event, on June 28 at 10 am AKST, will be “Oral History in the Digital Age.”

To join either webinar go here: <http://www.connectingtocollections.org/meeting/>

Heritage Preservation’s *Emergency Response and Salvage Wheel* is now available free of charge on the iPhone, iPod touch, and iPad as the “ERS: Emergency Response and Salvage” app.

Apple users can download this free app from the App Store. Simply search for “ERS: Emergency Response and Salvage.” To download, your device must run iOS 5.1 or later. Complete technical requirements are available on the ERS page at the App Store.

NEDCC posts recording of disaster planning webinar

<https://nedcc.adobeconnect.com/a1012789439/p13dtqx65i7/?launcher=false&fcsContent=true&pbMode=normal>

Internship Report

By Logan Lott, UAS Anthropology Student



Logan helps mount exhibit labels

When taking Zachary Jones' "Introduction to Archives and Museums Theory and Practice" last semester at UAS, I found that I had a real interest in museum studies. My degree program is in the social sciences with my primary concentration being in Anthropology, so I had been looking for a way to incorporate these years of education into some kind of tangible experience. At the end of the semester, the class was given an opportunity to apply for an accredited internship with the Alaska State Museum or one of the archives. Since I was a kid, I've had a love affair with museums and have visited many in my statewide and international travels. In acquiring this internship, I really felt as if this could be a possible gateway into a future in museum studies.

In my first few weeks of interning, I was able to assist Sorrel Goodwin, Paul Gardinier, and Jackie Manning in the de-installation of the *Boreal Birch* exhibit. I helped lift exhibit items, secure them into styrofoamed, Fairbanks-bound crates, kept a concurrent shipping catalog, and then aided in the sanding and repainting process of the temporary exhibit hall. This operation was then performed inversely with the installation of the *Sailing for Salmon* exhibit. These processes were as intricate as they were laborious, and demonstrated the level of care that went into each exhibit.

Many times people ask me, "What do you do at the museum?" My response is usually, "Whatever they let me do." This internship was so versatile that I could really wander about the different departments and taste test each one for as long as I desired. Perhaps my favorite place in the museum was in the collections department with Sorrel Goodwin. Sorrel would give me a grocery list of items to find homes for in the collection shelves and then let me loose upon this archaeological candy land. Sometimes I feel like the coolest kid around, getting to open a drawer of harpoon heads or a rack of antique firearms.

Children's activities were a fun diversion from the average school week. Lisa Golisek, the Museum Protection and Visitor Services Manager, had me aid in the creation of a giant, cardboard interactive life map in order for participating kids to learn about Juneau's homeless community. Through this activity, the children were to unlearn pervasive negative stereotypes regarding homeless people. Kids built miniature homes for their miniature Lego people out of random materials they were given according to a throw-of-the-dice that was intended to rival the lottery of life. The kids' creativity and gusto led to a two-way learning experience that was as fun as it was insightful.

Another memorable day was when conservator Ellen Carrlee and I went on a spring cleaning spree through the permanent exhibits. This cleaning spree saw me climb atop exhibits to vacuum the umiak, and scale the eagle tree where Ellen and I tag teamed dust bunnies with a backpack vacuum and a six foot feather duster. In what has become a popular Facebook addition, there is a photo of me and Ellen vacuuming the exhibit's stuffed Grizzly Bear.

Getting a chance to work with museum professionals was a highlight of my scholastic time in Juneau and has increased my knowledge of the inner workings of museums immeasurably. I hope to continue a lasting partnership with the museum through volunteering or even a possible career opportunity. I am thankful to the museum staff for their calm demeanors and thoughtful insights during my time here. I hope this internship continues to advance students' knowledge for museum studies as it has mine.

Volunteer Viewpoint

Tuesday's in Review: My Year at the Alaska State Museum

by Anna Thompson, ASM Volunteer



mu·se·um/myooˈzēəm/ noun: A building in which objects of historical, scientific, artistic, or cultural interest are stored and exhibited.

Who: Anna Thompson (that's me!), a junior at JDHS and lifelong doodler.

What: An opportunity to volunteer and receive an inside glance into the mysterious, hidden world of museums.

When: Tuesdays, once a week during my sixth period off campus.

Where: The Alaska State Museum, 395 Whittier Street Juneau, AK.

Why: At the beginning of my junior year my American History class embarked on a photographic approach to history. Everyone in my class was given a picture taken in the early 1900s of Alaska and the people who lived here at the time. Each one was different and each told a different story. Our mission was to find the story. All the photographs were from the Alaska State Museum.

To expand upon our limited knowledge of pictures in Alaska my teacher arranged for my class to visit to the museum and meet Paul Gardinier, who works in exhibits. This was my first real taste of the museum. Paul helped to explain that no one really knew the true story of the people in the photographs, or even who had taken them. Few were labeled or had the photographer's signature; our speculations were as good as his. I was hooked. The mystery was overwhelming, and the precise manner in which the pictures were displayed in the gallery pleased my "OCD" to no end. The thought of someday being a part of an institution that cared for the lost and the forgotten, caring for the objects of their lives was and is a huge honor. I wanted in.

I got in touch with Scott Carrlee, who is in charge of Museum Services, the next day. I explained to him that I was fascinated with the museum and was possibly considering a path in art conservation. He generously agreed to allow me to become an official volunteer at the Alaska State Museum.

How: How does anyone one become a volunteer? You offer a service and hope that someone accepts your help. I was extremely lucky, my help was accepted. I was able to see all different aspects of the museum, almost every week I worked in a different part of the museum. But there is no better way to get to know a museum that to help with its paperwork. My first and most daunting task, if I say so myself, was cataloging all the media in the museum that was not on DVD. I didn't even know what a Betamax Tape was until I cataloged one! But I made it and I was able to catalog every media device I could find in the museum.

On weeks where I was not cataloging I was trained in artifact handling, helped with displays, found objects in the storage and archive rooms, filed old museum newsletter from around the state, and learned how to use shock paddles in case a tourist, or local, had a heart attack while visiting the museum. I also managed to set off the museum alarm when I got lost in the basement after looking for chenille stems for a kids' day at the museum.

My Tuesdays never lacked spark or pizzazz, every moment was filled with a new experience and a new opportunity to learn. I am very grateful to the museum staff for giving me this chance to spy on the wonderful world that is museums. Pablo Picasso said "Give me a museum and I'll fill it," I just hope he meant fill it with opportunity for people like me.

Professional Time Wasting on the Web

Chicago museum adopts smoking-hot Palin sculpture

<http://www.adn.com/2012/04/18/2429158/chicago-museum-adopts-palin-sculpture.html>

Amateur Sleuth Helps Stop National Archives Theft

http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/html/nationworld/2018131402_apusnationalarchivestheft.html

SFMOMA uses Google Analytics

Google Analytics Case Study: SFMOMA

The Late-Capitalist Museum as Pre-Professional Museum

<http://galleristny.com/2012/04/10/the-late-capitalist-museum-as-pre-professional-museum/>

Love Fest' is the latest example of the Museum of Art & History redefining a museum's role in its community

http://www.santacruzsentinel.com/localnews/ci_20430708/love-fest-is-latest-example-museum-art-history

Italian museum burns artworks in protest at cuts

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-17754129>

Reach, Trust & Amplification: The Importance of Social Media in Nonprofit Marketing (STUDY)

<http://colleendilen.com/2012/04/23/reach-trust-amplification-the-importance-of-social-media-in-nonprofit-marketing-study/>

Lost Paul Revere Letter Found

<http://www.nedcc.org/eblasts/2012PaulRevereLetter.html>

Did you know you can search for artifacts online?

<http://www.pastperfect-online.com/>

Hands on collection from yesteryear

<http://vilda.alaska.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/cdmg2/id/5075>

The Power of Symbolic Participation: A Story of Skirball

http://museumtwo.blogspot.com/2012/04/power-of-symbolic-participation-story.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+museumtwo+%28Museum+2.0%29