

# Alaska State Museum Bulletin 53

June 2012

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## Sheldon Jackson Museum Artist Residency Program 2012

*By Nadia Sethi, Curator of Collections, Sheldon Jackson Museum*

The Sheldon Jackson Museum collections include artifacts representing the entire state of Alaska. Because the museum is located remotely in Sitka, however, few Alaska Native artists have an opportunity to visit the museum and see the collections in person. During the summer of 2012, the Sheldon Jackson Museum received grants from the Alaska Humanities Forum and the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian to bring a group of nine Alaska Native artists to Sitka to study the museum collections and share their work with the public through artist lectures, workshops and demonstrations. The visiting artist residencies provide an opportunity for museum staff to learn about the museum collections from the perspective of Alaska Native artists while giving artists an opportunity to closely examine historical artifacts in the collection. Visitors are provided with an intimate experience as they are invited to touch, smell and handle artists' work and speak with artists directly. This summer's visiting artists include Coral Chernoff from Kodiak, Marlene Nielsen from Kokhanok, Othniel Art Oomittuk from Point Hope, Jennie Wheeler from Yakutat, Sonya Kelliher-Combs from Anchorage, Patty Lekanoff-Gregory from Unalaska, Tommy Joseph from Sitka, Selina Alexander from Fairbanks, and Audrey Armstrong from Anchorage.



Coral Chernoff from Kodiak Island demonstrates blowing up a bear gut in the museum gallery. Coral has been experimenting with gut materials to construct rain gear, doll clothing and bags.

The first two visiting artists, Coral Chernoff (May 8-10) and Marlene Nielsen (May 25-27), both focused their residencies on sharing information about fish skin use as a textile material. Although few practicing artists work with fish skin today, historically skins from salmon, halibut, lamprey eel, jackfish, burbot, grayling and arctic char were used as materials to construct waterproof bags, boots, mittens, pants, parkas, quivers, blankets, window coverings and drinking containers. Seeing the Sheldon Jackson Museum's collection of fish skin clothing and containers was the first opportunity for both of these artists to see historical examples of fish skin artifacts in person. Both Nielsen and Chernoff described the collections as great teaching tools to learn stitching techniques and clothing designs. After seeing a salmon skin parka in the museum collection, Nielsen plans to start working on her first full size salmon skin parka later this summer. Chernoff will use information gained from her residency at a salmon skin processing and sewing workshop in Kodiak in August.



Marlene Nielsen from Kokhanok studies the design of a salmon skin parka she hopes to replicate later this summer

During the first week of June the museum hosted two artists who grew up in northern Alaska, mask carver Art Oomittuk (May 31-June 8) from Point Hope and conceptual artist Sonya Kelliher-Combs (June 4-8) now living in Anchorage but raised in Nome. Having Oomittuk at the Museum was an excellent opportunity to closely examine the Sheldon Jackson Museum's collection of one hundred and twenty-nine Point Hope masks. According to Oomittuk, there are few remaining artifacts in Point Hope. He will share images of the artifacts studied at the Sheldon Jackson Museum during a community presentation when he returns to Point Hope. In the fall Oomittuk will lead a workshop in Point Hope for high school students using images of the masks in the Sheldon Jackson Museum as inspiration for the creation of new work. Kelliher-Combs spent her time surveying the museum collection drawer by drawer looking at design elements and motifs on historical Inupiat and Athabascan artifacts. She is partnering with the Alaska Native Heritage Center to teach information gained during her residency as an instructor for an after school program for Alaska Native high school students.



Art Oomittuk from Point Hope examining masks during collection study

The visiting artist program will continue into the summer with overlapping artist residencies between carvers Patty Lekanoff-Gregory and Tommy Joseph (June 12-16), and a residency focused on moose heart and bladder bag making with Selina Alexander (June 18-28). The final artist residency with Audrey Armstrong will include a fish skin basketry workshop (July 19-21). We hope that the visiting artist residency program will continue next year to extend the opportunity to study the museum collections to more artists throughout the state.

Thank you to the Alaska Humanities Forum and the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian for providing funding for our visiting artist program and to all of the participating artists who participated in the program and shared their knowledge!

## **Ask ASM**

**Question:** I have a question about exhibit labels. Our museum has NO environmental controls and it gets really humid so papers will fall off the walls and/or curl up and get crinkly. First of all, I'm wondering if you could recommend a type of label material that would be resistant to humidity.

Secondly, I'm looking for some sort of adhesive that would reliably stick the labels to the walls, but not cause too much damage to the walls if we want to move them.

So, in sum, I'm looking for a combination of a water resistant label material plus an adhesive strong enough to hold the labels on the walls, but not so strong as to take off paint or damage the walls.

**ASM:** If you have a budget, you can have your labels printed on vinyl. Most any print/sign shop will have these capabilities. The vinyl is used for most exterior signage these days and would certainly hold up.

A cheaper option is the back to back laminating trick which was described in Bulletin 37 <http://museumbulletin.wordpress.com/2011/02/23/alaska-state-museums-bulletin-37/#2>

As for mounting, a good application of 3M 99 spray adhesive will hold the laminated label securely to most substrates. There are a number of options for mounting material:

- 4ply museum matt board
- Gator board
- Aluminum and PVC panel (aluminum composite panel) various brands, available at sign shops, Plexiglas panel Extruded PVC panel (Syntra or similar brand product) matted and framed in a molding profile that fits the house period style.

There is not a great answer for the mounting to the wall problem without knowing all of your details. A free standing label frame is one way. If there is picture hanging molding on the wall, that could be used to hang frames or panel mounted labels. We have mounted our labels on 3/8" Plexi and hang them from the tops of cases with monofilament or fishing cable and crimps. This is quite attractive and is visually non obtrusive. Double stick foam tape works well for sticking up labels (again a quality 3M brand will serve you better). It is hit or miss for removal. Generally a very careful removal will do no damage. Sometimes soft spots in the paint or sheet rock make removal impossible without ripping the wall surface. A hard plaster surface might be safe for removal. I would not use this option on historic paint or wall paper. More information on exhibit labels can be found in this Bulletin article. [http://www.museums.state.ak.us/documents/bulletin\\_docs/bulletin\\_7-8.pdf](http://www.museums.state.ak.us/documents/bulletin_docs/bulletin_7-8.pdf)

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## Shaking the Money Tree

### MAP

The [Museum Assessment Program](#) (MAP) is an IMLS funded program available to small and mid-sized museums of all types. It provides over \$4,000 worth of services and resources—including a review by an experienced peer reviewer, a MAP Bookshelf specific to your assessment type, access to a MAP online community with resources and discussion topics and access to AAM's Information Center Resources. During MAP your museum

conducts a self-study, consults with a museum professional and gains the tools to become a stronger institution.

“Without a doubt, MAP has had a big impact on our ability to fundraise. We used the MAP recommendations to create case statements for grants. I can directly tie over \$50,000 in funding we received to the MAP grant recommendations regarding the facility.”

—Michael Shanklin, former director, Discovery Science Center and current CEO, Kidspace Children's Museum

### **Did you know?**

- MAP reports and activities can be used in funding and grant requests
- MAP can help you prepare for strategic planning
- MAP is an extremely affordable way to get consultative advice specific to your museum
- MAP can help you engage your community
- MAP is a great way to improve communication between staff and board, getting everyone on the same page
- The MAP process is customized to your museum's needs
- You have a role in selecting your peer reviewer
- You choose one of three assessment types: Organizational, Community Engagement or Collections Stewardship.

Since 1981, thousands of museums have utilized MAP, and the program has been integral to these institutions achieving their goals. But don't take our word for it. Get MAPped! Become the next museum to get this grant.

Apply today for the **July 1** application deadline at <http://www.aam-us.org/museumresources/map/apply.cfm>.

### **IMLS**

The American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC) Message:

Monday, June 4, 2012

#### **URGENT MESSAGE!**

If you have not yet done so, please respond now to the request from IMLS posted below. The AIC Board of Directors agrees that that the proposed new grant guidelines pose a real threat to conservation funding and the long-term care of collections. It is imperative that IMLS hear from the conservation community—from individual conservation professionals as well as from AIC as a whole.

AIC is submitting a response on behalf of the organization. Some points taken from it include:

- By merging Museums for America (MFA) and Conservation Project Support (CPS), there will no longer be a funding source dedicated to conservation.
- Although multiple applications will be permitted by IMLS, multiple submissions from institutions will ultimately compete against each other. Exhibition or education proposals, for instance, would be pitted against conservation proposals.
- If museums focus their grant writing efforts on the support of exhibitions, education, and community outreach, the grants will provide important support for annual programming budgets, yet these funds will do little to support museum missions to preserve and make their permanent collections accessible in a more lasting way.
- One January 15 deadline for all proposals puts a great burden on museum staff members, particularly for those working in smaller institutions.

While AIC applauds IMLS for considering changes to improve its grant services, combining the CPS and MFA programs and instituting a single application deadline will have unintended consequences that will result in museums placing less emphasis on conservation of collections. AIC urges IMLS to consider leaving CPS as a separate program or combining it with collections stewardship.

How have the collections for which you are responsible benefited from IMLS conservation support in the past?

What impact on collections care do you envision with the implementation of the draft guidelines being presented by IMLS?

Speak up! Now!

Thank you,  
Meg Craft  
AIC Board President

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

May 9, 2012

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**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](mailto:comments@imls.gov). Final guidelines will be posted no later than October 15, 2012.

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## Spotlight on Grant in Aid

The Alpine Historical Society (AHS) received a \$2,000 mini-grant FY 2012 for outdoor exhibit improvements at the Alpine Historical Park in Sutton. The funds were used to remove two boilers that were part of an exhibit of coal mining equipment and have a foundation created to place the boilers on. The mining equipment was brought in from three former mining sites in the Sutton area in 1989 and placed on railroad ties which were rotting. One of the boilers had a prominent tilt.





Large boiler before



Small boiler before

The work began in October 2011 with the removal of the boilers, and pads cleaned for concrete foundations, one with a pedestal. The foundations were made before the ground froze in the autumn of 2011, and the boilers were lifted on to the new foundations in May 2012. They look very attractive and level on their new solid foundations. Fencing at the display will be replaced by a volunteer work crew this summer. The work crew will also clean up the debris of dirt, lichen, sticks and stones that have collected in and around the boilers. The AHS provided the funding (\$900) for the equipment and operator costs to remove and replace the boilers once the foundations were completed.



*Boilers after placement on cement pads*

The Alpine Historical Park, managed by AHS, is located in the center of the Sutton community on the Glenn Highway, a National Scenic Byway. The park is a gathering spot for several annual community events during the summer. A new Sutton Community Library/Resource Center which shares a parking area with the Alpine Historical Park opened June 15, 2012, so there will be presumably more community members visiting the Park before and after their use of the library. The AHS has worked closely with the Friends of the Library to make this new and larger Community Center possible. This spring 100 high school students have already visited the park to view the exhibits through self-guided tours which focus on the former Sutton coal mining industry, local geology, construction of the Glenn Highway and the Ahtna Athabascan culture in the area. Maintaining and improving the exhibits is an important goal for AHS.

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## **ASM on the Road**

Scott Carrlee ASM Curator of Museum Services traveled to Fairbanks to assist the Pioneer Museum with the re-installation of the Rusty Heurlin paintings which comprise the Big Stampede Show. The 15 paintings were removed over a year ago so that the theater could be refurbished.



Volunteers preparing the Heurlin paintings for re-hanging

Bob Banghart, ASM Chief Curator went to Valdez to help move ASM's Hitchinbrook Island lighthouse lens which is on loan to the Valdez Museum. The whole assembly is 8' tall and the base is 5' in diameter. She tips the scales at just over 1600 pounds.



Bob with the lighthouse lens in Valdez. Andrew Goldstein in the background

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## **Alaska Museums in the News**

### Ketchikan Exhibit Explores Scientific Illustration

(A great article about merging science and art to create a beautiful, yet educational experience.) <http://www.adn.com/2012/06/10/2498840/ketchikan-exhibit-explores-scientific.html>

### Sitka artist challenges conceptions of modern aesthetics and Native identity

(Discusses the historical context, stereotyping, and prejudice artist Nicholas Galanin addresses in his photographs.)

<http://www.adn.com/2012/06/09/2498636/sitka-artist-nicholas-galanin.html>

### North to the Art

(Through a multi-artist exhibit, The Anchorage Museum attempts to reveal the true harsh winters of the far North, rather than typical idealized versions seen in most art)

<http://www.ktva.com/home/outbound-xml-feeds/North-to-the-art-152046085.html>

### Bringing the physical and natural world to your fingertips

(New expansion at Anchorage's Imaginarium Discovery Center now leaves the educational museum with more than 80 interactive exhibits for Alaska's children)

<http://www.anchagemuseum.org/expansion/imaginarium.aspx>

### Pahl's latest: A hammerin' machine

(Owner of the Hammer Museum, Dave Pahl creates a contraption of scrap metal that will be on display outside his museum as a tribute to Haines Highway pioneers)

<http://www.chilkatvalleynews.com/story/2012/05/31/news/pahls-latest-a-hammerin-machine/3297.html>

### Trove of Artwork Found in Alaska Ivory Bust Prompts Buzz in Art World

<http://www.alaskadispatch.com/article/trove-artwork-found-alaska-ivory-bust-prompts-buzz-art-world>

[http://articles.boston.com/2012-05-04/news/31575135\\_1\\_paintings-bloomfield-police-illegal-animal](http://articles.boston.com/2012-05-04/news/31575135_1_paintings-bloomfield-police-illegal-animal)

### Pioneer Park offers taste of history, family fun

<http://newsminer.com/bookmark/18463452-Pioneer-Park-offers-taste-of-history-family-fun>

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## Professional Development/Training Opportunities

Heritage Preservation, in cooperation with the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), is presenting WebWise Reprise, online event based on the IMLS WebWise 2012 conference.

June 28 at 10 am AKST, will be “Oral History in the Digital Age.”

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

### 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

- 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/>

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## Professional Time Wasting on the Web

Follow Museums like Others Follow Sports Teams

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/nick-kolakowski/follow-museums-like-other\\_b\\_1554638.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/nick-kolakowski/follow-museums-like-other_b_1554638.html)

Smithsonian Team Visits Sitka for Field Study

<http://www.kcaw.org/2012/06/04/smithsonian-team-visits-sitka-for-field-study/>

**Museum App Builder 2.0** has just launched! It's a do-it-yourself app publisher that allows museums and historic sites to build a mobile app very quickly and affordably - without any technical knowledge.

[www.toursphere.com/video](http://www.toursphere.com/video)

Cool Museum Website

<http://www.meyvaertmuseum.be/it/Immagini>

How do you create a Future-Thinking Museum?

[http://museumtwo.blogspot.com/2012/05/blueprint-book-club-part-1-how-do-you.html?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+museumtwo+%28Museum+2.0%29](http://museumtwo.blogspot.com/2012/05/blueprint-book-club-part-1-how-do-you.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+museumtwo+%28Museum+2.0%29)

Southwest Museum's Conservation Project Draws Closer to Completion

<http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/culture/la-ca-southwest-museum-renovation-20120513,0,1988934.story>

Getty Research Institute Launches Free Online Search Gateway to the World's Art Libraries

[http://www.artdaily.org/index.asp?int\\_sec=11&int\\_new=55320](http://www.artdaily.org/index.asp?int_sec=11&int_new=55320)

Pride & Prejudice: (What) Can Nonprofits Learn From the For Profit World?

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/richard-dare/nonprofit-funding\\_b\\_1471726.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/richard-dare/nonprofit-funding_b_1471726.html)

Good Stuff on the Alcan

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LfWdLs3PPm8>

A little known incident in a largely forgotten war

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle\\_of\\_the\\_Pips](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_the_Pips)