



Alaska State Museums Bulletin 75

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Crating with Coroplast®

In preparation for moving 35,000 objects out of our museum building before it gets demolished to make way for the new Alaska State Museum, we have found it necessary to build many different types of crates for large objects. Some of these crates are the familiar kind made out of plywood and dimensional lumber. These protect the object during transport to our offsite storage and may need to be house the object for a longer period or be stacked on top of each other for efficient use of space. A future post will cover some of the things we have learned about building and using these types of crates.



We also found a need for crates that are intended to be more temporary in nature, that just protect the object from dust or moisture as we move them into a neighboring building. These will not be stacked and will likely be disposed of after they have served their purpose. We found it is faster and easier to use an alternative construction material called corrugated plastic sheeting.



The sheets are made from a copolymer of polypropylene and polyethylene plastic, or sometimes just from polypropylene, and it goes by the trade names Coroplast® or Correx®. You can find more information about it at the terrific website of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts called Cameo (http://cameo.mfa.org/wiki/Main_Page) or from the National Park Service's Conserv-O-Gram on safe plastics <http://www.nps.gov/museum/publications/conservoogram/18-02.pdf>.

There is an archival form of this sheeting available from supply companies such as University Products, Archivart, Gaylord, and Talas. It is free from color, antistatic agents, or UV inhibitors. This kind is more expensive and is used in permanent storage when the plastic is actually touching our artifacts, such as the backing board for certain paintings or rigid boxes for artifact storage.



However, for temporary crates this version is not necessary. Fluted plastic sheeting is popular with the sign printing industry, and if someone in your town is able to make large political or advertisement signs, they are likely using this type of sheeting to do it and you can usually buy some from them.

Working with fluted plastic sheeting

What are the advantages? Corrugated plastic sheeting is tough, light weight, water resistant and fairly easy to cut and shape. It is much quicker to cut than wood and does not require a table saw or other woodworking equipment. What are the disadvantages? It is only rigid in the direction along the flutes. Across the flutes it bends fairly easily. The larger the crate the more it tends to bend and bow. It is more expensive than plywood but you can sometimes design the crate to use less of it so this may not be a major factor. Plus the time savings in the construction may off-set the extra cost of the material.

There are two directions to cut the sheets and it is important to pay attention to this. You are either cutting along the flutes or across the flutes. You can use any kind of razor knife or box knife but if you are going to be making a lot of crates or boxes, it really pays to get the right tool for the job. That right tool is this:



You can find out how to purchase this one here <http://pages.videotron.com/plastkut/>

Or a similar tool here <http://sawtrax.com/coro-claws>

This tool helps to quickly cut a large sheet in to smaller sections along the flute. In wood working this is known as a “rip-cut” or “ripping a board” and you generally need a table saw or a skill saw if you are doing this to a sheet of plywood.

The Plast-Kut tool fits into the flutes and stays there as you move it along. You can either cut through the entire board or just cut one wall of the flute. Cutting one wall allows you to easily fold the board and make a corner.



Cutting across the flutes is just done with a straight edge and a box cutter like you would regular corrugated card board.



To make a corner across the fluting, you use a box cutter to make an inverted “V” shape and remove that triangular wedge.



To make a corner along the fluting you can just cut both sides of the flue and remove the middle section.



You then fold the board and run a bead of hot glue to hold it in place.



Fluted sheeting can be screwed onto a wooden frame with short dry wall screws to form the sides of a crate.



Or you can make a lightweight framework out of cornered strips of fluted sheets and screw them to a platform.



The various pieces can be hot glued or even taped together depending on how long the frame needs to last.



To cover really long objects like this kayak, we built the frame out of the fluted plastic and then used sheets of plastic to make the cover to keep rain and dust off.



Another cool trick is to hot glue a sheet of mylar in so that you can keep track of how the object is doing during transport.



You can also create quick storage bins for framed artwork. The sheets not only form the outside of the box but also separate the bin into slots for the framed art. These can be wrapped in plastic and move on 4 wheel dollies.



Conclusions

If you are having to crate up or build temporary covers for a lot of large objects for a short move into a neighboring building, having some additional construction material choices is a good thing. Fluted plastic sheeting is a tough, lightweight material that is

quick to cut and shape. These are the main advantages of choosing this material over plywood.

Some other things to consider when choosing fluted plastic sheets:

- Beware sharp corners and edges. It can cut you like a paper cut.
- The plastic is a little static-y so it will pick up dust and other debris from the surface that you are cutting it on. It is not a good idea to lay it on the floor to cut it.
- The surface is slick. Artifacts tend to shift and slide more than on grey board.

All in all, we found that fluted plastic sheets helped us solve some of the problems we have encountered when moving every single object out of our museum building.

Ask ASM

Question: I have a question that maybe you can answer. Is there a difference between the two titles “Museum” and “Heritage Center”? And do they serve different purposes or do they serve the same way except they have a different title? Can a Museum be a Heritage Center or can a Heritage Center be a Museum?

ASM: That is a good question! But there isn’t really a good answer for it. Mostly it is a matter of opinion and you can call your institution anything you want. I think it mostly depends on what the institutions primary mission is. One of the primary missions of a museum, and the one that distinguishes it from other great organizations, like galleries, visitor centers and even heritage centers, is to care for objects in perpetuity (forever!). This is considered the “public trust duty” of a museum. If a Heritage Center is caring for objects in perpetuity, then at least part of it is functioning like a museum. The most important thing to consider is that you will be held to the standards of the name you select. If you call yourself a museum, then you will be held to national museum standards. Its kind of like the word "Hospital." We all have an expectation for what goes on in a hospital and we would not want to go to a place that was only "sort of" a hospital. The same is true for a museum. You can’t just pick and choose the parts you like and leave the other parts out. Some people want to use the word "museum" to describe their institution when it comes to attracting the public, or to apply for funding, but when it comes to the hard part of caring for collections then they are suddenly something else. Yes, there are different kinds of hospitals and there are different kinds of museums. But you know that you go to a hospital to get well and we know that museums are places where artifacts are kept safe and the collections care standards are built around that goal.

I am not sure if Heritage Centers have nationally recognized standards or an accrediting body like museums do. I couldn’t find anything online that seemed to suggest they do. I did find this interesting chart from Jill Norwood of the National Museum of the American Indian on the AAM website for peer reveiers <http://www.aam->

us.org/resources/assessment-programs/peer-review/peer-review-newsletter/special-considerations-for-reviewing-tribal-museums

Operational Area	Mainstream Museums	Tribal Museums
Collections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ preserve ▪ store ▪ kept from public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ protected but used by practitioners
Exhibitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ academic ▪ scholarly ▪ elite 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ local ▪ community-centric
Programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ expensive ▪ focused on what audience desires 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ free ▪ affordable ▪ focused on community
Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ exclusive ▪ restrictive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ inclusive of community and protected from "outsiders"

Heritage Centers seem to be more about celebrating and perpetuating living cultures and less about collecting and preserving artifacts, although they often seem to do a little of both.

Shaking the Money Tree

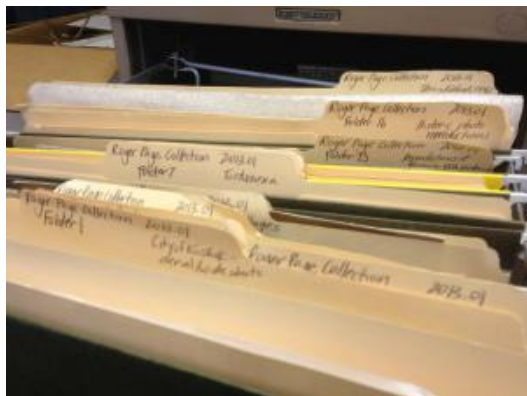
Reminder: Grant in Aid applications are due June 2, 2002. You can find information about this program from our Grants webpage <http://museums.alaska.gov/grants.html>

Spotlight on Grant in Aid

Kodiak Maritime Museum



As part of the Kodiak Maritime Museum's (KMM) long term effort to upgrade its collections management, and with funding from the 2013 Grant in Aid program, KMM contracted in 2012 with Anjuli Grantham of Fireweed Historical Services to sort through a collection of images taken by Kodiak photographer Roger Page in the 1970s and 1980s. Roger Page died in 1990, and his sister Laretta Johnson donated the images to KMM in 2010. Of the hundreds of images donated by Laretta Johnson, 243 were identified as relevant to KMM's mission to "recognize, preserve, and interpret Kodiak's maritime heritage." These photographs and negatives were sorted by Ms. Grantham by subject such as "ports and canneries," "fishing boats," and "Crab Festival," stored in archival sleeves, and accessioned into KMM's PastPerfect collections database.



As part of the grant project, Ms. Grantham also worked with KMM Board Member Marnie Leist to create a Collections Policy for Kodiak Maritime Museum, which addresses KMM's circumstances and long term collection goals. The Board is now reviewing this draft with an eye toward adopting it in December.

Alaska Museums in the News

Exhibit variety plan for Sitka Museum

<http://www.adn.com/2014/04/13/3423546/exhibit-variety-plan-for-sitka.html>

Addison Field Named Chief Curator of the Alaska State Museums

<http://juneauempire.com/art/2014-04-03/field-named-chief-curator-alaska-state-museum#.U1cIHPldV8E>

Professional Development/Training Opportunities

BASIC ARCHIVAL TRAINING

May 14, 2014 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM

Alaska & Polar Regions Collections & Archives, UAF

The Alaska State Historical Records Advisory Board (ASHRAB) will sponsor *Basic Archival Training* May 14, 2014 from 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM in the multi-media classroom located on the third level of the Elmer E. Rasmuson Library. The training will be conducted by ASHRAB members that are trained archivists.

In this workshop you will:

- Learn about archival terminology, ethical responsibilities & outreach
- Learn the principles of archival organization & functions: provenance, *respect des fonds* & original order
- Master the fundamentals of acquisition, appraisal, arrangement, description & preservation of archives
- Examine successful reference & access strategies
- Understand how to deal with collection water emergencies

There is no registration fee or cost to attendees.

To register for the training contact dean.dawson@alaska.gov prior to May 9th.

Scholarships

Deadline for scholarship applications is April 24th

Ten travel scholarships are available up to \$1000 each. To access the *Scholarship Application Questionnaire* go to the State Archives website here <http://archives.alaska.gov/home.html> under “What’s Happening” and submit to Dean Dawson, State Archivist.

* * * Instructors * * *

Bruce Parham is the retired director of the National Archives & Records Administration in Anchorage. He has 37 years of experience in planning and directing archival and records management programs and activities. Bruce has a bachelor’s degree in History from Western State College of Colorado and master’s degrees from the University of Wisconsin-Madison (Library Science) and University of Colorado-Boulder (History). He currently serves on the Board of the Cook Inlet Historical Society.

Dennis Moser is the Head of the Alaska and Polar Regions Collections & Archives at the Rasmuson Library of the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Dennis has a master’s degree in library science from the University of Michigan and a bachelor’s degree in Anthropology from the University of Texas.

Zachary R. Jones is the Archivist & Collection Manager for the Sealaska Heritage Institute. Zach obtained a bachelor’s degree in History from Utah State University, a master’s in Comparative History from the College of William & Mary, and a Certificate of Advanced Studies in Archives & Records Administration from University of Wisconsin. Jones is also an Adjunct Instructor of History at UAS. Jones is currently a Ph.D. student in Ethnohistory via UAF.

Dean Dawson serves as State Archivist and has 30 years of archival records management experience. He attained a Certified Records Manager credential, archival certificate, and holds a bachelor’s degree in English from the University of Northern Iowa.

MAY DAY

May Day <http://www.heritagepreservation.org/mayday/index.html>

Every year Heritage Preservation encourages libraries, museums, archives, historical societies, and preservation organizations to set aside May 1 to participate in [MayDay](#), a global effort to encourage emergency preparedness.

Heritage Preservation is [collecting examples](#) of the simple preparedness steps that cultural organizations are undertaking this spring. It's easy to take part in MayDay. Last year's participants held fire safety sessions, inventoried emergency supply kits, and created and updated disaster plans. Any cultural institution submitting a brief description of its 2014 MayDay plans or accomplishments by May 31, 2014, will be entered in a drawing for disaster supplies generously donated by [Gaylord Brothers](#).

From now through May 31, Heritage Preservation is also offering its award-winning [Field Guide to Emergency Response](#) and [Emergency Response and Salvage Wheel](#) at special MayDay prices. And our [ERS: Emergency Response and Salvage app](#) remains free of charge for Apple, Android, and BlackBerry devices. In addition, David Carmicheal's book [Implementing the Incident Command System at the Institutional Level](#) will also be offered at a discounted rate.

Be sure to check out [Heritage Preservation's Facebook page](#) for weekly disaster preparedness tips throughout the month of May. America's PrepareAthon! is a national and community-based campaign for action designed to increase emergency preparedness and resilience. The overarching goal of the campaign is to increase the number of people who understand the hazards most relevant to their community, know the steps to take to protect themselves and their families and practice these steps.

America's PrepareAthon! builds on existing preparedness campaigns by providing free downloadable materials including step-by-step implementation guides for workplaces, schools, houses of worship, community-based organizations, and the whole community to learn the steps people should take to be ready should a disaster occur. Actions include signing up for mobile alerts and warnings, holding a preparedness discussion and conducting a drill so people are familiar with what to do beforehand.

Throughout the year, organizations can organize community days of action to encourage individuals to discuss, practice, and train for relevant hazards. Twice a year, in the spring and fall, America's PrepareAthon! will hold two national days of action. The national day of action is April 30, 2014 and will focus on preparing organizations and individuals for tornadoes, hurricanes, flooding, and wild fires. The second national day of action year will be September 30, 2014.

To learn more about America's PrepareAthon!, its supporters and to register your activity, visit www.ready.gov/prepare. Follow the latest preparedness conversation on Twitter @PrepareAthon using #PrepareAthon. If you have any questions, please send your comments to PrepareAthon@fema.dhs.gov.

Professional Time Wasting on the Web

The Color of Light

http://www.getty.edu/conservation/our_projects/science/art_LA/artist.html

We Love Museums...Do Museums Love Us Back?

<http://www.pinkyshow.org/projectarchives/videos/we-love-museums-do-museums-love-us-back>

Anatomy of a Mermaid/merman

<http://www.theguardian.com/science/animal-magic/2014/apr/16/mermaid-stripped-naked>

Visit to Seward's House

<http://www.alaskadispatch.com/article/20140331/sewards-day-visit-home-man-who-bought-alaska>

The New Rijksmuseum (cool video of the renovation)

<http://vimeo.com/91439084>

Start-up Museums: who cares

http://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/start-up-museums-the-exhibition-teams/2014/03/27/9e1e3354-b35f-11e3-8cb6-284052554d74_story.html

Nina Simon and the Wisdom of the Crowd

<http://leadershipmatters1213.wordpress.com/2014/04/16/nina-simon-and-the-wisdom-of-the-crowd/>

Creativity in Museum Practice

<http://www.voiceamerica.com/episode/76844/building-a-creative-culture>