



Alaska State Museums Bulletin 79

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Out with the Old and in with the New

A photo essay by Damon Stuebner

This year was a milestone year for the Alaska State Museum in Juneau. We moved our entire collections (35,000+ objects) into a new storage vault and the old museum building was torn down to make way for the construction of the new State Library, Archives and Museum (SLAM) building. Here are some photos of the demolition of the old building.





Ask ASM

Question: I have a friend who has a sign her late dad made that she wants to preserve. It is made out of wood (milled lumber), with lead letters (hand-cut from sheet lead) nailed on with iron nails. It has a hole where it was hung, and a crack running into that hole. They'd like to rehang it outside, and were wondering what could be done to strengthen it. They were thinking to attach it to a backing and wondering if they could cover it with some kind of clear plastic. Any ideas, suggestions, warnings?



ASM: The biggest concern is what kind of weather it will face. Protecting it physically from wind/rain/snow while still allowing it enough sun exposure to dry off would be good. So beneath some sort of roof structure is best. Since this is not considered a museum item but is intended for ongoing use, you could cut a thin piece of wood the exact shape, maybe a little smaller all 'round so as not to be visible, and attach that wood to the back with little brads/tacks/tiny nails that don't extend to the front to give it some secondary support and take the stress off that big crack. You could cut holes in the support sheet of wood where the current holes are located (maybe a bit bigger so they would not be seen) and continue to hang it in the same style as before. Again the support wood would take off the stress a bit from the old wood. You could use a different material for the support, but keep in mind that wood likes to contract and expand with changing weather, and if you got something too rigid and unforgiving you might cause stress and new cracking in the old wood as it tried to move with changes in humidity.

Coatings and plastics and the like are tricky because they often don't perform well in the long run, yellowing, peeling, etc. Something like a Plexiglas cover will have a certain glare and detract from the look of the sign, as well as get scratched and fogged pretty fast in an outdoor environment. It also has the potential to trap moisture and grow mold. I think if the desire is to put it outside, like near the front door, a supplementary wood support on the back will prolong its life but ongoing deterioration is to be expected. Some other more protected spot, like inside a garage or protected from the weather under a roof but still in an unheated space would be best.

And of course you should not do anything to clean it, maybe at the most dust it with a dry soft paintbrush. It has a gorgeous surface and patina.

Shaking the Money Tree

Museums Alaska

Collections Management Fund

Deadline: Tuesday, March 31, 2015

In 2015, \$100,000 in grants is available to museums and cultural centers in Alaska for collections management supplies and activities. The goal is to build capacity for managing collections through professional expertise, training, and conservation materials and supplies.

Applicants must be 501(c)(3) nonprofit, government, tribal entities or equivalent organizations that hold collections in the public trust, such as a museum or cultural center. Small, rural-based organizations are encouraged to apply. Preference will be given to projects that are collaborative or cooperative in nature. Emergency conservation projects will be given priority. Membership in Museums Alaska is encouraged but not required.

NEH

Preservation Assistance Grants for Smaller Institutions

Deadline: May 5, 2015

Preservation Assistance Grants help small and mid-sized institutions—such as libraries, museums, historical societies, archival repositories, cultural organizations, town and county records offices, and colleges and universities—improve their ability to preserve and care for their significant humanities collections. These may include special collections of books and journals, archives and manuscripts, prints and photographs, moving images, sound recordings, architectural and cartographic records, decorative and fine art objects, textiles, archaeological and ethnographic artifacts, furniture, historical objects, and digital materials.

Website: <http://www.neh.gov/grants/preservation/preservation-assistance-grants-smaller-institutions>

State of Alaska

Grant in Aid

Deadline: June 1, 2015

The Alaska State Museum awards grants to Alaska museums and museum-related organizations, such as historical societies or support groups, for projects that improve the quality of museum services and operations within the state. The grants are awarded on a competitive basis once a year. For more information visit the website <http://museums.alaska.gov/grants.html>

Spotlight on Grant in Aid

The Seldovia Museum

Since its last remodel in 2008, the Seldovia Museum has had a largely static set of exhibits, caused by a combination of factors: a shortage of cases, a small collection, and a lack of funds to create new exhibits. In 2013 and early 2014, the Seldovia Museum obtained four new cases through donations and grants. The Alaska State Museums Grant in Aid mini-grant allowed the museum to purchase the materials, supplies and tools needed to put these cases into service.

Although the bulk of our visitorship comes from outside the community, increasing the number of Seldovians involved with the museum is an ongoing goal. Being able to mount new and changing exhibits is an important step in attaining this goal.



Items purchased with this grant included basic museum-grade materials, such as ethafoam planks, E-flute and B-flute board, acrylic risers, and unbleached muslin fabric that can be used to easily make a variety of basic mounts and supports for museum objects. Materials for welded specialty mounts, including brass rod, brass mount blanks, solder, flux paste and MAAP gas were also purchased. Along with those materials, the museum purchased tools such as ethafoam knives, a brazing torch, copper tongs, a third-hand tool and a hot glue gun with ethylene vinyl acetate hot glue sticks. Having an array of exhibit "support" materials readily on hand has allowed the freedom to create small exhibits without having to seek additional funding.

Alaska Museums in the News

Museum of the North brings objects back home

http://www.sitnews.us/1214News/120414/120414_artifacts.html

Professional Development/Training Opportunities

SAVE THE DATE

The Smithsonian Institution and Office of Protection Services will be hosting its annual National Conference On Cultural Property Protection March 26-27 in Washington, D.C., followed by an IFCPP post-conference certification class on March 28. For more information see <http://www.natconf.si.edu/>

Professional Time Wasting on the Web

Time Capsule found

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2014/12/11/boston-another-time-capsule-unearthed/20272595/>

The Future of History

<http://engagingplaces.net/2014/12/11/video-the-future-of-history/>

Cool resources for Collections Management

http://www.tc.gov.yk.ca/museum_resources.html

Crowdsourcing

<http://www.crowdconsortium.org/webinar-crowdsourcing-101-fundamentals-and-case-studies/>