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## Press Release

SHELDON JACKSON MUSEUM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
DATE: **March 27, 2012**

### April Artifact of the Month: Pair of Nushagak Masks

The Sheldon Jackson Museum's April Artifact of the Month is a pair of small masks from the village of Nushagak in the Bristol Bay region. Both masks are surrounded by two circular willow hoops secured by fish skin and cotton line. The masks have round eyes and nostrils that are typical of the Nushagak region and protruding conical shaped mouths. Strips of caribou fur decorate the exterior, and traces of blue, white, red and black paint decorate the surface of the masks. Each mask has five holes along the exterior of the mask face which may have originally held appendages. Mask IIA9 has three remaining appendages including two wooden paddle-shaped attachments and one spade-shaped attachment, all of which are secured to the mask by strips of baleen. Both masks were collected by the Rev. Sheldon Jackson during the late nineteenth century.



During a museum study visit in 2000, Julia Apalayak from Manokatak recognized these masks as similar to examples that she saw being used as a child. According to a Apalayak, "In the summer I heard that a shaman was going to dance. I went to see them and they had masks like this. One was a land animal and the other was one was an ocean animal. The hoop around the mask is the ellanguaq – universe."

The two Nushagak masks will be on display in the Sheldon Jackson Museum gallery from April 3rd-April 30th. Winter hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. with a discounted \$3 winter admission. Visitors 18 and younger, Friends of the Sheldon Jackson Museum, and those with passes are admitted free of charge.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

Phone (907) 747-8981 Fax (907) 465-3004

[www.museums.state.ak.us](http://www.museums.state.ak.us)



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