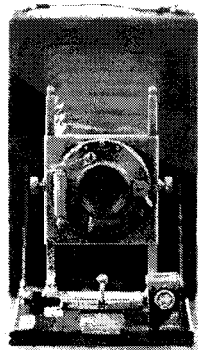


SPECIAL REPORT

Sitka Historical Society





Sitka Historical Museum

Sitka Historical Society

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April 20, 2010

Dear Mayor and Assembly Members:

We are pleased to present our annual report detailing our unique partnership.

Sheldon Jackson College gave birth to the Sitka Historical Society's beginnings in 1957 in the staff lounge at North Pacific Hall, with forty-six charter members approving a Constitution and Bylaws. Gifts of pictures and objects dealing with local history were accepted, and meetings were held in the Bishop's House and St. Michael's Cathedral with artifacts and pictures displayed during the meetings.

Shortly after Alaska's Centennial Year in 1967, and the completion of the Harrigan Centennial Building, the Society was invited by the City & Borough to provide exhibits of local history in the building. "A convenient marriage took place; the city provided the space and upkeep of an exhibit area for the Society in order to develop a local historical museum..."

The Society was incorporated in 1978 to preserve Sitka's history and artifacts. The mission of the Sitka Historical Society & Museum is to: **Preserve historical artifacts and archival materials relating to the human history of the Sitka area for the inspiration, education and benefit of the public.** It is a membership organization with a nine member Board of Directors. The Board meets monthly and functions as a policy making body.

In addition to operating the museum, the Society provides a myriad of activities in Sitka and has an active program of historical related events, including publication of a quarterly newsletter. Special educational programs are offered throughout the year for residents to learn more about Sitka's past. Local companies utilize the resources of the museum and staff to conduct annual training of their staff. Our Web site hits a broad audience worldwide and offers a convenience to potential visitors and clients who need quick historical information about Sitka. A historical map is provided for visitors detailing the 24 historic sites on the National Historic Landmark Sites and National Register for Sitka. Over twenty-five thousand, people (includes local residents, international visitors, and serious researchers) were beneficiaries of the Sitka Historical Society and Museum during 2009.

Sincerely,

Bob Medinger, Executive Director

Attachments: Society Update, Curator Report, "Success Story", Rasmuson Grant Summary



Sitka Historical Society & Museum 2009 Report Summary

Accomplishments:

- Hiring of Ashley Kircher as Curator (Started 6/1/09) Masters of Museum Studies
- Placement of 10-Week Summer Museum Intern: Amy Thomson

- 26, 648 Museum Visitors for the Year (via electronic door counter)
- 22 Volunteers contributing over 1300 hours of time
- Hosted 20 student and/or special tours/groups to the Museum
- White House: 18 month Special Use Permit from USFS for Work Space and Storage
- Alaska Day / 50 Year Statehood Exhibit & Presentation w/Vic Fisher
- “For the Rights of All” Alaska Civil Rights Movie Premier & Panel: 1100 participants
- Acceptance of Robert DeArmond Archives/Photos: Processing Underway
- New Board Members: Jim Case, Chris Todd
- Coordinating Agency for Totem Square Renovation Effort & Partnership
- Robert DeArmond Day & Reception
- Coordinating Agency for St. Michael’s Bell Tower Rehab & Bell Ringing Rebirth
- Kaisei Maru Centennial Celebration: Co-sponsored w/City
- Society Participant in “Sitka Historic Preservation Commission”
- Sitka Museum and Repository Consortium partner
- 1890’s Art Exhibit for Summer Tourism Season
- Elizabeth Peratrovich Day Presentation
- Partner/Sponsor of “Cultural & Heritage Tourism Conference”
- Chamber of Commerce Presentation: “Veterans Day”
- Provided History Training for “Tour Guides” in Sitka
- PFD Pick-Click-Give Participant
- Participant in Interpretive Planning for Fort Rousseau Causeway State Historical Park
- Annual Society ANB Cemetery Clean-Up

Focus for 2010:

- Pending: Rasmuson Grant Award, \$60,000 (attached)
- Strategic Plan Update
- Extension: White House “Special Use Permit” from USFS
- Museum / Exhibits: Expansion & Upgrades

Budgeting/Income History	Calendar 2007	Calendar 2008	Calendar 2009
City & Borough of Sitka	\$36,000	\$44,500	\$130,250
Entrance Fees	\$2,469	\$7,498	\$7,515
Donations, Fund Raising, Memberships	\$5,750	\$4,928	\$18,196
Net Gift Shop Profit	\$18,655	\$27,143	\$27,166



Sitka Historical Museum Curatorial Report, January 2010

Ashley Kircher

Challenges, June 2009:

- Collections storage room at maximum capacity
- Hundreds of un-accessioned objects
- All collections information in paper-form only; no centralized database
- Lack of policies to organize and streamline museum procedures
- No new exhibits or updates
- *These problems stemmed not from a lack of dedication, but from a lack of trained staff and time

Goals met June 2009-January 2010:

- Museum cataloging software “PastPerfect” purchased and installed
- Collections storage room cleaned and organized
- Created and implemented preliminary policies for:
 - Collections management, including:
 - Object handling
 - Storage
 - In-coming and out-going loans
 - Accessions procedures, including:
 - How to accept an object
 - Condition reports
 - Complete Inventory procedures
- Wrote a grant for museum-quality storage cabinets
- Gift shop redesign, resulting in 40 sq feet of new exhibit space
- This exhibit space to be developed in February
- Successful silent auction doubled profits from previous years
- Increased community awareness of the museum through radio and newspaper interviews, exhibits, and outreach programs (Chamber presentations, brown bag lunch, Annual Meeting speakers, schools)
- Traveling exhibit for Alaska Day
- New exhibit at the First Bank on Chichagoff Mine
- Volunteer numbers increased
- Museum inventory begun to locate and evaluate each object in the collection
- *Museum awarded the “Museum Success Story” for 2009 by Alaska State Museums for its progress and achievements

Goals for the future, 2010:

- Continue organizing all collections information on PastPerfect for eventual on-line accessibility
- Increase web presence
- Begin rotating exhibits at the Performing Arts Center February 2010
- Increase collaboration with local institutions
 - Sitka Maritime Heritage Society
 - National Park Service 2010 International Conference on Russian America
 - Mt. Edgecumbe High School photo project
- Update and redesign existing exhibits, utilizing new technologies and approaches
- Install new exhibits that explore untold stories in Sitka’s past:
 - Formation of Alaska Native Brotherhood
 - Commercial Fishing
 - Aleut presence in Sitka
- Increase professional standards, policies, and protocols for eventual museum accreditation
 - Disaster Planning
 - De-accessions to streamline collection
- Strategic Planning for exhibits, active collecting, and outreach programs

Sitka Historical Museum

Ashley Kircher, who interned in Alaska as part of the ASM Summer Internship Program in 2008, was recently hired as the new Curator of Exhibits and Collections at the Sitka Historical Museum. Prior to her arrival, gifts had been steadily donated to the museum, but the lack of a curator or a collections manager resulted in a pile-up of items and archival materials in the collections room.

loggers and a dehumidifier were put in place to control temperature and humidity fluctuations. Once a formal inventory of the existing collection has been completed, Ashley will be able to go through and assess which of these donations are appropriate for accession. All non-collections items—cleaning and painting materials, old exhibit panels, and gift shop items—were also moved out of the room.



Ashley worked with Amy Thompson, an ASM summer 2009 intern, to begin clearing out a collections room so tightly packed with treasures that you could barely open the door! They began by bagging, labeling, and packaging - in large plastic tubs - all items not already accessioned into the collection, including any items lacking paperwork, and moving them to their secure off-site storage house. They also moved the entire photography collection and photo index to this location, creating an inviting workspace for photo researchers.

The storage space basement was cleaned and prepared to house objects as needed. Data

Amy also updated exhibits: scanning, re-printing, and mounting old photos that had yellowed and curled; updating wall text; and painting outdated wood paneling with clean white paint. These subtle changes have already improved the feel of the exhibit space. Additional exhibit redesign and updates are planned for the quiet winter ahead.

Amy's internship was a success and will help her develop as a museum professional. Her enthusiasm, hard work, and creativity have jump-started the process of collections management at the Sitka Historical Museum.

**Organizational Effectiveness Plan
Rasmuson Grant
Sitka Historical Society & Museum
Updated Executive Summary Sheet**

Year 1 of Grant

1. Movement toward Museum Standards and Accreditation	
Institutional Museum Assessment Program (IMAP)	\$5000
The Institutional Assessment reviews the museum's entire operation, including mission and planning, governance, administration, finance, collections stewardship, interpretation and presentation, marketing, public relations, membership, and community support.	
Collections Management Assessment Program (CMAP)	\$5000
The Collections Management Assessment focuses on collections management issues in the context of the museum's total operations, including mission, governance, finance, interpretation, and marketing. The emphasis is on collections stewardship, including scope of collections, acquisitions and deaccessioning, legal and safety issues, documentation, backlog, inventory and risk management.	
2. Curatorial Summer Intern @ 10 Weeks Travel & Stipend	\$3600
Housing provided by Historical Society	
3. Development of special Program Grants: Contractor	\$3000
4. Membership growth, fund raising, donations, sponsorships: Fund Development	
Training/support/contract/implementation	\$3387
5. Technology Consultant & Network Upgrade / Automated Back-Up & Archive System	
Consultant: Contract & Travel Hardware & Software	\$4513
Year One Total	\$24,500

Year 2 of Grant

Projected Implementation of IMAP and CMAP Recommendations

IMAP: Institutional Museum Assessment Program	
1. Update of Strategic Plan Goals & Mission	\$3000
2. Marketing analysis and recommendations/implementations	\$2000
3. Fund Development: Year II Including Grant Writer	\$6000
4. Management: Policies & Procedures Updates	\$2500
5. Fiscal Operations: Audit, Updates, Contracting via Accountants	\$3000
CMAP: Collections Management Assessment Program	
6. Collections Policy & Procedures	\$3000
Disaster Management, Deaccessioning, Active Collecting	
7. Museum Management Software: Updates & Training	\$2000
8. Archives Conservation training for staff and volunteers	\$4000
9. Museum Lighting: Analysis and Implementation	\$5000
10. Model Exhibit Development (Single Exhibit)	\$5000
Year Two Total	\$35,500