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Press Release

ALASKA STATE MUSEUM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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State Division of Library, Archives and Museums Offers Lecture Series Wednesdays at Noon in Juneau

JUNEAU – The Andrew P. Kashevarov Memorial Lecture Series -- to be held Wednesdays at noon from January 26 through March 9 at the Alaska State museum in Juneau -- features new research on a variety of topics drawn from the collections of the Alaska Division of Library, Archives and Museums (LAM), presented by LAM staff and visiting researchers. New or seldom-seen historical photos, documents, and artifacts will be displayed in conjunction with each program. Admission is free, and visitors are welcome eat lunch during the presentations.

January 26:

Shgen Doo Tan George, Daaklaweidi clan, Angoon

Alaskan Artist and Teacher

Learning from Robes

Many artists find museum collections a critical source of technical information as well as inspiration. The Alaska State Museum holds a significant collection of Northwest Coast Native weaving, ranging from a 6,000 year old spruce root basket to hand-woven contemporary regalia. Shgen Doo Tan George, an accomplished educator and weaver, will present on the benefits of museum research for weavers. She will focus on the Chilkat weaving tradition, and will outline some of the things that can be learned from studying various robes in museum collections -- such as comparing weaving techniques and styles. A special selection of weavings from the museum collection will be available for viewing.

February 2:

Steve Henrikson

Alaska State Museum Curator of Collections

Bales of Alaska: Bear Guide, Author, Curio Collector, and Interpreter of Alaska

Louis L. Bales (ca. 1859- 1929) wore many hats during his long and adventurous life: mountain climber, mail carrier, census taker, trader, big game guide, woodsman, amateur naturalist, miner, collector of ethnological information and artifacts from Alaska Natives, witness to the 1912 Katmai eruption, writer and tour guide. His solo travels in Alaska earned him the reputation of a master survivalist: as one writer put it, "You could start this fellow out with a jackknife and he would go all over Alaska." He collected Yup'ik artifacts for curio dealers such as Seattle's "Ye Olde Curio Shop," as well for the Alaska Historical Library and Museum in Juneau. He was instrumental in mounting exhibits on Alaska for the international expositions in St Louis (1904), Portland (1905), San Francisco (1915), and San Diego (1915-17). This presentation will summarize Bales' legacy, and features recently-discovered historical images contributed by Bales' descendents, and a selection of Yup'ik artifacts he collected for the museum in 1914.

February 9:

Janice Criswell, Bonnie Fitzjarrald, Mary Lou King, Kay Parker, Janet Schempf

Juneau Weavers

Hands Across Time: the Reemergence of Raven Tail Weaving in southeast Alaska

Twenty years ago, the Friends of the Alaska State Museum sponsored a group of weavers to create the first original "Ravens Tail" ceremonial robe to be woven in southeast Alaska since the early 1800s. A team of artists -- eight primary weavers, and over a dozen more in supporting roles -- completed the robe after 1800 hours of volunteer labor. The robe was then ceremonially "brought out" at Celebration '92 and named "Hands Across Time Robe" after it was danced with for the first time by Dr. Walter Soboleff. The weavers donated the robe to the museum with the stipulation that it be allowed to be used for ceremonies. This presentation will bring together some of the key weavers to talk about the project and about their individual work over the past 20 years. Contemporary weavings, as well as the only known preserved fragment of an original robe, will be displayed.

February 16:

Ellen Carrlee

Alaska State Museum Conservator

Conservation Treatments for Archaeological Artifacts

The Alaska State Museum has been involved in the preservation treatment of artifacts ranging from the most ancient archaeological basketry on the Northwest Coast to maritime artifacts from the 1868 wreck of the *Torrent*. What does it take to preserve these kinds of collections? What are the big picture issues that museums, governments, archaeologists and other culture resource management professionals are grappling with in Alaska? Conservator Ellen Carrlee discusses archaeology in Alaska from the viewpoint of artifact preservation and shares the latest developments in Alaska State Museum research and outreach.

February 23:

Mark Whitman

“Perpetual Student of Alaskan History”

The Hunt for Alaskan History: Conventional and Unconventional Paths to Alaska's Past

In pursuing the details of Alaska's past, Mark Whitman's research leads him down avenues of investigation, both traditional and intuitive. Though he brings persistence, passion, and a love of the hunt to his research, his subjects often end up pursuing him: stories of Alaska's people and past that reach out through the pages and photographs and capture his heart and imagination. He is driven by the thrill of discovery, and cherishes those magic moments when answers reveals themselves at last in the archives or museums, through personal contacts, or with help from fellow history lovers. Accuracy and good scholarship are paramount, but he often draws from his skills as a master storyteller to hitch historical facts into truly compelling narratives. He feels that Alaska's history belongs to everyone and it needs to be shared in innovative and compelling ways. This presentation will provide an overview of some of the fascinating characters and subjects that have stalked Whitman through the stacks and storage rooms of the library and museum.

March 2:

Alaska State Library Head of Historical Collections Jim Simard and

Juneau photographer Ron Klein

Wet Plates in Cold Climates: Alaska's Oldest Old Photograph and Why

Jim Simard and Ron Klein are on a search for the oldest photo taken in Alaska. Klein, a practitioner of early black art processes, is the guest curator of an upcoming exhibit at the Alaska State Museum. The exhibit, which will run through the summer of 2011, is tentatively titled *The First 25 Years of Alaskan Photography*, and will be composed primarily of photographs and artifacts from the collections of the Alaska State Library, Archives and Museums. The exhibit will feature images by masters of “wet plate” photography, who made significant contributions to the fascinating story of photography in the Alaskan frontier. Simard and Klein will discuss the creation of this exhibit and present some highlights from the interesting and enduring works of art, created over 120 years ago under extremely challenging conditions and with the most rudimentary equipment and chemical processes.

March 9:

Sara Lee

Alaska State Museum Protection & Visitor Services Assistant

Taking Science for a Spin: Earth Secrets Revealed on the Museum's Big Ball

In 2009, the museum, in association with the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, unveiled a new high-tech projection system called “Science on a Sphere.” SOS allows museum visitors to visualize, in realistic 3-D, highly-technical new research data about geography, weather conditions, sea ice conditions, glaciations, earthquakes, continental drift, tsunamis, vegetation patterns, animal migrations, and even air traffic control. The system uses six computers that drive four digital projectors to cast seamless moving images of the planet onto a spherical screen six feet in diameter. Host Sara Lee, virtuoso of the “Wii Remote,” will lead a virtual tour of the history of our planet with emphasis on the new views she has created to put Alaskan geography and history in global perspective. In the process, she hopes to inspire artists, scientists, students, techies, historians and educators to create their own presentations and imagery for the SOS.

Regular winter hours at the museum are 10 a.m. To 4 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. Discounted winter admission is \$3. Visitors 18 and under are admitted free of charge. Admission is free for this Wednesday noon lecture series. An annual pass that allows unlimited visits to the Alaska State Museum and the Sheldon Jackson Museum in Sitka is available for \$15.

Assistance is available for visitors with special needs. Please contact visitor services at 465-2901 before the visit for more information.

The Museum Store will be open winter hours, from 11 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. until March 1.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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