



BARANOV QUARTERLY

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE KODIAK HISTORICAL SOCIETY ♦ FALL 2010

IN THIS ISSUE:

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- Page 2

CURATOR'S CORNER

An artist revisits

- Page 3

WELCOME NEW STAFF

Marie Acemah joins the museum

- Page 4

MUSEUM HAPPENINGS

Remarkable bottles and a lacquer box restored

- Page 5

ART ACQUISITION INITIATIVE

A closer look at Alf Pryor's photography

- Page 6

MEMBERSHIP

Our thanks to new & renewing members

- Page 7

95 Panes

The storm windows are up, the flowers are withering under the morning frost and Don Corwin is packing up his tools – another season of preservation work on the historic Baranov Museum building is coming to a close. This year, with funding through a designated legislative grant from the State of Alaska, our steady progress with window rehabilitation brought new clues to the building's evolution and a surprise discovery. A restoration carpenter and historic mill work specialist, Don Corwin arrived in Kodiak in July and focused his initial work on the glassed-in sunroom on the front of the building. Though a later addition installed by homeowner W.J. Erskine in 1942, the sunroom is a significant architectural feature of the building, and provides an important space for museum programs and activities. The redwood framing, holding in place 167 individual panes of glass, has steadily degraded through age and exposure to Kodiak's maritime climate. Throughout the summer, Don has progressed by removing each window pane, restoring and refastening the frame components using the original materials as much as possible, and reinstalling the glass. As of October, approximately 60% of the sunroom windows, the framing of 95 panes, have been rehabilitated.

Additional work on a small second-story

continued on page 5

Grants to Improve Collections Care

The Baranov Museum is pleased to announce receipt of funding to support ongoing collections storage improvements. The Alaska State Museum Grant-in-Aid program will provide \$5,400 to support the work of a graduate-level internship at the museum in the summer of 2011. The intern will be a second-year student in Objects Conservation and will serve eight weeks at the museum conducting condition assessments, performing minor treatments to artifacts, and creating custom storage to support and protect collections items. The internship continues a multi-year effort to re-house objects and artifacts to reduce environmental risks. The internship is also supported by a grant from the Alaskan Leader Fisheries Foundation, whose early support of the project was critical to demonstrating local support and matching funds.



Top photo: A close-up of the sunroom window framing on July 8 demonstrates the degree of damage and wood rot sustained by the redwood material.

Bottom photo: The same view on July 14 shows the window framing repaired in situ with redwood pieces milled to replace the damage areas.



Curator Ellen Lester and collections volunteer Evelyn Wiszinckas created this multi-level storage box to support and protect various woven grass pieces.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Upcoming Kodiak Historical Society events and programs:

- Wed., Oct. 27
7pm
Kodiak Senior Center
- Join us for our 56th **Annual Membership Meeting!** Enjoy refreshments and door prizes, hear annual reports from our staff, and vote in the Board of Directors election. Our guest speaker Dawn Black, co-author of *Natalia Shelikhova: Russian Oligarch of Alaska Commerce*, will share her research and recent international experiences in her presentation.
- Friday, Oct. 29
3:30 to 5:30
Baranov Museum
- Stop by the Museum while making the rounds of **Downtown Trick or Treating.** We'll be handing out treats and compliments to Kodiak youngsters in their costumes.
- Friday, Nov. 5
5 to 7
Baranov Museum
- First Friday Family Fun Night - Built to Last** Our messiest and most delicious program is back! A tasty way to learn about Alaska's oldest log structure is to build it with pretzel logs, graham crackers and chocolate icing! Pre-registration is required as space is limited.
- Tuesdays
Nov. 9, 16, & 23
12 to 1
Baranov Museum
- New program! Join us for a **Historical Writing Workshop** over three Tuesdays in November. The workshop is an opportunity to develop a piece of fictional or nonfictional writing inspired by an object at the museum. The workshop is free and adults with or without writing experience are welcome.
- Friday, Dec. 3
5 to 7
Baranov Museum
- First Friday Family Fun Nights** are a great opportunity for families to explore the museum together with free admission and a new theme each month. Touchable artifacts, children's activities, stories and scavenger hunts will help you learn about Kodiak's past in a fresh new way.
- Saturday, Dec. 4
10 am to 12 pm
Baranov Museum
- Annual Holiday celebration!** Join us for a picture taking opportunity with Father Christmas and Babushka in front of our Kodiak bears, free museum admission, and a holiday craft activity for the kids! Enjoy a special sale on gift shop merchandise all day.

For more information about our programs or to register please call Marie Acemah at (907) 486-5920 or email marie@baranovmuseum.org

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OUR MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the Kodiak Historical Society is to collect, preserve, research and exhibit historically significant artifacts, documents, photographs and other data relative to the Kodiak and Aleutian Islands area; to evaluate and interpret the materials in the collections for educational purposes and presentation to the public; and to continue to develop and maintain a library of rare books about the Kodiak and Aleutian Islands area.

MUSEUM STAFF

Katie Oliver, Executive Director
Alice Ryser, Archivist
Ellen Lester, Curator of Collections
Marie Acemah, Education Coordinator
Nancy Pierce, Gallery & Gift Shop

MUSEUM HOURS

Winter Hours
Tues - Sat: 10 - 3
Closed Sunday & Monday
Summer Hours
Mon - Sat: 10 - 4
Admission \$3.00

Noted wood carver visits his Russian American symbol

The Baranov Museum has many visitors from countries around the world every year that expound on the museum's exhibits. This summer we had a visitor who had a history with our museum: Dean Otteson and his wife, who now live in Las Vegas. They lived in Kodiak in 1971-73, were away one year at school and again in 1974-1976. Dean was happy to see the Russian Imperial Crest that he carved after he left Kodiak. The following is an article written for the "Baranov Museum" newsletter in 1986 by Beverly Horn, former Curator, which explains the story of the crest's creation.

"Thanks to a former Kodiak teacher, the museum has a replica of the original Russian Imperial Crest which was found in Sitka in 1935. The original now resides at the Alaska State Museum in Juneau and is believed to have been sent to Kodiak in 1787 by the Governor of Siberia and is considered to be one of the rarest items remaining in Alaska from the Russian period. According to the 1976 Alaska State Museum's bicentennial catalog, the crest may be one of a number sent to Kodiak in 1787 along with several bronze plates inscribed "Russian Territory".

Our replica is as close to the original as possible even to the missing corner (left wing tip). The medium is different. The replica is made from yellow cedar and was carved by former Kodiak resident and teacher, Dean Otteson. Otteson was principal of the Kenai Junior High School and known as Alaska's "wandering woodcarver" when he carved the Russian Crest.

The Kodiak Historical Society commissioned Otteson to carve the replica that hangs in the museum. The double eagle is mounted on maroon velvet and accented with a gold frame. Otteson, who taught wood carving at Kodiak Community College during his stay here, describes the finished work as "done in yellow cedar that tries to capture the nature of brass."

The brass double-headed eagle has crowns on its heads and the feet hold the symbols of power: the sword whose symbolism is obvious, and the orb, a small globe with a cross on top which is also a symbol of royal power. When Ivan III married Byzantine Princess Zoe, her dowry included the right to adopt the Byzantine double-headed eagle as the Tzar's coat of arms. An octagon shape covering the eagle's breast has the figure of St. George, patron Saint of Russia on horseback, slaying the dragon.

According to Khlebnikov's life of Baranov, such crests were given to local chiefs, or toyons, as a symbol of friendship and loyalty to Russia. It is believed that at least 30 plates and crests were sent to Alaska in 1787. The plates were to have been buried at various places along



Artist Dean Otteson with his Russian Imperial crest wood carving. Photo by Ellen Lester.

the coasts. The bronze plates inscribed with "Russian Territory" were placed between specially made bricks and buried. In the vicinity of each place, a crest was displayed or given to a local chieftain. No others are known to have been recovered.

Otteson's replica is, in his own words, a combination of rusticity and elegance. "There is a rustic nature to the work, yet a feeling of elegance", said Otteson. "It was made as an enlarged duplicate so the children of Kodiak could see it and appreciate its significance to Kodiak's past." Although this carving was commissioned by the historical society, funding was shared by the Lion's Club of Kodiak and the Alaska State Museum Grants-in-aid program."

Although Dean has left a trail of wood carvings, Dean's hobby is currently photography. The Russian Imperial Crest carving, the focal point of the Russian American Exhibit, has been enjoyed by visitors for close to three decades.

Ellen Lester

WELCOME NEW STAFF

We are pleased to announce that Marie Acemah has been hired as the new Education Coordinator at the Baranov Museum. Marie is an Alaskan educationalist with experience teaching and consulting in the US and in East and West Africa. She has taught at secondary boarding schools in Uganda and in Ohio, instructed youth at a vocational school for orphans in Uganda, and has developed primary and secondary level curricula in partnership with Ministries of Education in Tanzania and post-conflict Liberia. Her experience includes working as an international education consultant in Washington D.C., New York, Liberia, and Uganda for organizations including Relief International and the International Rescue Committee. Marie earned a B.A. from St. John's College and an M.A. in International Educational Development from Columbia University, Teachers College.



Marie Acemah joined the Baranov Museum staff in July as our new Education Coordinator.

Marie replaces Ani Thomas who will stay involved with the Family Fun Night program but devote more time to family and international travel. We posed several questions to Marie to help introduce her to Museum members and friends.

What makes you interested in working and living in Kodiak?

Marie: Kodiak has long been a vacation spot for me to visit my mom and family here, and every time I stepped on the island I felt I never wanted to leave. The combination of ocean and mountains, of so many cultures and rich stories from history and the present day compelled me to finally take the leap to move here with my son, who is now eleven months old. I knew my ideal job in Kodiak would empower me to engage with Kodiak history and life, to constantly learn new stories, and to use my education skills to serve the community. Working at the Baranov Museum fills all of those roles and more, and allows me to wear many new and interesting hats throughout the working day. Another component I love about Kodiak is the multiculturalism, which is just one of the reasons it is a great place to raise my Ugandan-Alaskan son.

What is important to you about education at museums?

Marie: I am delighted to see what a strong education program the Baranov Museum has, as educational classes and opportunities allow youth and adults to interact with the rich lore of the museum. Museums are a wealth of opportunity to interact directly with history, but without educational information and stories about historical objects, learning opportunities are missed. I believe that the vital role of museums is to allow people to engage in a lively dialogue with

the past, and to relate the past to the present day. That could mean a group of young artists painting Matryoshka dolls and reflecting on how artisanship has changed throughout the centuries and decades. It could mean a group of adults stitching a Kamleika and learning about subsistence survival skills on our rainy island. Education is one of the essential ways we interact, engage deeply, and ask critical questions of the past.

What do you enjoy most about working at the Baranov Museum?

Marie: While as I have already stated I love working at the Baranov Museum as it connects me to the local community, allows me to constantly learn new and amazing stories, and affords me the opportunity to use my skill-set to serve the community, my favorite part about working at the Museum are my colleagues! I have never worked for any organization that has such a devoted and friendly group of employees, management, and volunteers. I look forward to seeing the people I work with every day, which makes work a treat. I find that the friendly Baranov staff reflect the Kodiak community culture, which is incredibly warm and supportive of community members. In regards to the Baranov Museum exhibits, my favorite is the basket weaving room, as my introduction to Kodiak and the museum was through attending Hazel Jones' wonderful springtime basket weaving class on the Baranov porch. The Baranov Museum is an all-around great place to work.

MUSEUM HAPPENINGS

continued from cover page

window on the building's east elevation yielded a remarkable discovery. We believe that W.J. Erskine covered the window unit with multiple layers of material in the early 20th century while preparing the room for use as a darkroom to develop his many photographs. The window remained covered throughout the building's boarding house and early museum periods. As the room now serves as a collections storage area for the museum, the window covering provides a necessary function in protecting sensitive collection materials from light damage, and was left in place. When Don removed the materials blocking the window, presumably in place for 80+ years, he discovered three unlabeled antique bottles neatly aligned on the sill. The three bottles share a light blue color and rainbow patina but are distinctly different from one another in size and shape. The smallest of the bottles features a maker's mark of a boldly embossed five-point star surrounded by two additional stars. Several diagnostic characteristics of this bottle, including side mold seams which terminate markedly below the bottle lip, a humping of the glass thickness in the area where the seams end, and the absence of a pontil scar on the base, indicate that it is a mouth-blown (or hand-made) bottle with a likely manufacture date between the 1860s to 1890s.

As our research continues, the bottles will join a special collection of objects and artifacts discovered in the building over the years, including a kayak model, bullet casings, wallpaper samples, a wheelbarrow wheel and a spruce root basket.

Collections Spotlight

Museum staff selected this Alaska Commercial Company lacquer cigar box for special treatment by Objects Conservator Dana Senge last spring. The box is significant because of its association with a Kodiak family and as one of the few objects in the collection featuring emblems of the Alaska Commercial Company, owners of the Museum building from 1868 - 1911. Donated in 1972 by famed Kodiak bear guide Eli Metrokin, the box features a fur seal on a rock in front of a mountain range, while each side has delicately painted patterns of stems, leaves and flowers. The decorative layer of the box is applied over layers of papier mache.

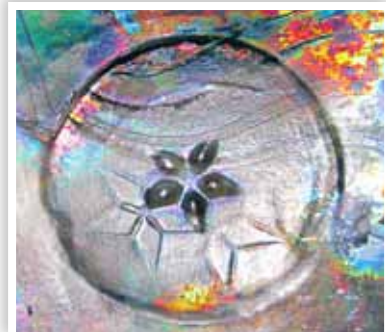
The purpose of the treatment was to stabilize loss areas of lifting and peeling paper and remove adhesive electrical tape remaining from an earlier repair attempt. Ms. Senge also filled loss areas on the box with a layer of Japanese paper toned with watercolors to match the surrounding background and image colors.

The photos at right show the lacquer box before treatment (above) and after. Additional photographs of Ms. Senge's conservation work at the Museum can be viewed online at our flickr stream www.flickr.com/photos/baranovmuseum



Above: The three bottles as discovered in the collection storage room windowsill after an estimated 80-year period.

Below: The detail of the maker's mark featured on the base of the smallest bottle.



ART ACQUISITION INITIATIVE

The Baranov Museum is pleased to participate in the Art Acquisition Fund, a Rasmuson Foundation program administered by Museums Alaska. This year we were able to purchase four works for the permanent collection by Kodiak artist Alf Pryor. The artwork, known collectively as *South End Canneries*, are original photographs each individually mounted on pieces of found tin.

The subjects of the photographs in *South End Canneries* are two former salmon processing operations located on southern Kodiak Island – at Akalura near Alitak Bay and at Moser Bay. The Akalura cannery, est. 1890, was one of the first sites of commercial salmon processing on Kodiak outside of the Karluk spit. In her book *Salmon from Kodiak*, historian Pat Roppel notes that the cannery was bought out by Alaska Packers Association (APA) in 1892 and became a flagship site, running six beach seine operations and floating traps. The Moser Bay cannery, the last cannery to be built in the area, was established by the Far North Packing and Shipping Company, an operation of the Suryan family of Anacortes, Washington. The operation passed through ownership by Libby, McNeill & Libby, and Columbia-Wards Fisheries before putting up one last pack in 1958.

South End Canneries presents the remains of the rivalry for Kodiak's commercial fishing resources in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in a fresh and distinctive style. The panoramic photographs offer a compelling juxtaposition of industrial development (and now decay) in remote Kodiak. The use of locally found tin as a mounting material adds a physical dimension to the flat images, and underscores the artist's intent to encourage viewers to consider preservation and loss. Of his work, Alf explains, "I've spent every summer of my life

fishing for salmon at our family set net site. I've seen these canneries deteriorate over time; it's not a slow process. I feel a need to try and make a visual record of these places before they are gone forever and forgotten."

The Baranov Museum has participated in the Art Acquisition Initiative since 2003, previously purchasing works from Bruce W. Nelson, Mark Witteveen, Bob Tucker, Amy Reisland-Speer, Sven Haakanson, Jr., Gloria Selby, Peter Lind, Sr., and Antoinette Walker. The purpose of the program is to encourage museums in Alaska to purchase the work of accomplished Alaska artists for their collections, and to support living, practicing Alaska artists through these purchases.

Below Right: *Moser Bay Boiler*, 2010

Below: *Akalura Bunkhouse*, 2010



MEMBERSHIP

We would like to extend sincere thanks to all of our new and renewing members from July, August & September. Your continuing support is truly appreciated.

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To become a new or renewing member please call the Baranov Museum at 486-5920. If we have inadvertently left you, your spouse, or your business off the list, please call for corrections.

The Baranov Museum is operated in partnership between the Kodiak Historical Society and the City of Kodiak. The Kodiak Historical Society is funded in part by the City of Kodiak, Kodiak Island Borough, Alaska State Museum, Institute of Museums and Library Services, the Rasmuson Foundation, and many private donors. We thank you all for your support!

Thank you Kodiak for supporting our summer raffle and helping us raise more than \$6,500! We are especially grateful to **Maritime Helicopters** for donating the grand prize! 100% of proceeds benefit Baranov Museum programs.

Raffle Winners:

Brian West
Jessica Werries
Nancy Frost

Grand Prize Aerial Helicopter Tour for four people
\$250 shopping spree at the museum gift shop
\$150 shopping spree at the museum gift shop





KODIAK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

BARANOV MUSEUM

101 Marine Way
Kodiak, AK 99615

Annual Meeting!

Join us for the Kodiak Historical Society Annual Meeting on **Wednesday, October 27, 2010 at 7pm** at the Kodiak Senior Center. Enjoy refreshments and a presentation by guest speaker Dawn Black, and vote in the Board of Directors election. The meeting is free and everyone is welcome.



Yes! I want to help preserve and share Kodiak history

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Email: _____

Please send a gift membership from me to: _____ at the \$_____ level

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

My check made payable to the Baranov Museum is enclosed

Please charge my membership(s) to my credit card:

Card Number: _____ Exp Date: _____

Signature: _____

I would like to begin / renew my membership as a:

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- Patron \$ 250 - 999
- Benefactor \$ 1000+

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- Individual \$ 20
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