

Lingít Aaní: The Land of the Tlingit

The Ketchikan Museums are on the ancestral lands of the Tlingit, who have been living here since time immemorial. Kichxáan (Ketchikan) was a Tlingit summer fish camp around the mouth of Kichxáan Héeni (Ketchikan Creek). Ketchikan remains the home of the Taant'a Kwáan (Sea Lion Tribe) of the Tongass Tlingit.

Our Mission:

The mission of the Ketchikan Museums is to collect, preserve, interpret and creatively share the history and culture of our region to serve, educate, engage and enrich our community.

Totem Heritage Center:

In addition, the Totem Heritage Center preserves and perpetuates the living artistic traditions of the Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian peoples that gave rise to the original totem poles on display and provides the opportunity to discover, learn and practice Native arts to inspire cultural understanding.

2024 photos, clockwise L-R from top: Janice Jackson with students from her Mixed-level Regalia class; Chris Boss, from the UAS Maritime Training Center, at the *On the Edge* exhibit opening; Ketchikan Museums staff (L-R) Erika Brown, Hayley Chambers, Marni Rickelmann, Teresa DeWitt, Anita Maxwell, Stacy Brainard, Ryan McHale, Deborah Mercy, and Erika Jayne Christian at the *On the Edge* exhibit opening; a young visitor trying on an immersion suit as part of the *On the Edge* Family Fun Day; Ray Troll leading a school group through the *Cruisin' the Fossil Coastline* exhibit; Sylvia Thompson in a Cedar Bark weaving class.



Ketchikan
MUSEUMS
TONGASS HISTORICAL MUSEUM
TOTEM HERITAGE CENTER



2024 ANNUAL REPORT





Seiner No. 6 is a cutaway drawing of the F/V Alsek by Tom Crestodina and a recent acquisition (above). As a longtime crew member, Tom, began making his signature cutaway drawings on the F/V Alsek's galley table. KM 2024.2.11.1



Students from a Drum Making & Design class taught by Kevin Clevenger (above). Christina Weber with her student in Spring Break Cedar Bark Weaving (below).



Celebrating the opening of the Ketchikan Salmon Walk with interactive stations along the creek. UAS Salmon in the Trees station with Barb Morgan and scouts (below).



COLLECTIONS

- Accepted 47 donation offers and purchases of over 322 individual items for the collection. Thank you to everyone who generously donated artifacts and stories to the Museums!
- Provided public access to collections and archives available at KetchikanMuseums.org
- Responded to 211 requests for research or historical photograph reproductions for a variety of personal, scholarly, and government projects
- Received 211 loans from 28 lenders for use in exhibits to enhance our displays
- Produced a monthly Artifact of the Month article. Our gratitude to the staff of the Ketchikan Daily News for publishing these!
- Utilized 161 volunteer hours

PROGRAMS & OUTREACH

- Hosted 117,897 visitors at the Tongass Historical Museum and the Totem Heritage Center. This includes locals, school groups, adult students, researchers, and visitors. Our online interactions totaled 12,917 visitors to Virtual Exhibits, 3,447 to Past Perfect Online, 175 YouTube subscriptions and 3,295 video views, and 19,813 Ketchikan Museums site visitors.
- Thank you to our seasonal staff for being wonderful hosts to a record number of visitors: Amy Mandel, Angel Williams, Braxton Zink, Clancy Thomas, Ella Bullock, Emery Mattson, Emily Dunn, Kepler Strakweather, Mary Kowalczyk, and Rebecca Mike!
- **Museum Midday** presentations were offered on the first Thursday during the fall and winter: *Adventures in Color* with Grace Freeman; *Silko's "Storyteller," Climate Change, and the Ketchikan Connection* with Dr. Alex Hunt; *On The Edge: Stories From Ketchikan's Working Waterfront* with Chris Boss, Jenn Brown, Tessa Frost, and Keenan Sanderson; *Harvesting Protocol, Cedar Bark & Traditional Values* with Dł'a Gwa T'awaa, Teresa Varnell and Ilxílee Stáng, Gloria Burns; *Ketchikan Indian Community's Tlingit Language Team* with Yakdushí, Lisa Milne-DeWitt and Kiyéis Tláa, Natasha Clevenger; *Unlocking the Wisdom of an Ancient Canoe* with Stormy Hamar and Stephanie Hamar from the Haida Canoe Revitalization Group; *Our Submerged Past — Archaeology in Southeast Alaska* with Dr. Kelly Monteleone.
- **48th-49th Annual Native Arts Studies Program:** *Drum Making & Design* with Kevin Clevenger (two classes); *Introduction to the Woodshop* with Steve Thomas (two classes); *Ulu Workshop* with Jake Beimler and Joron Whitton; *Copper Knife Workshop* with Jake Beimler

and Joron Whitton; *Beginning Carving* with Michael Milne; *Spring Break Cedar Bark Weaving* with Christina Weber; *Mixed-Level Regalia* with Janice Jackson; *Intermediate/Advanced Cedar Bark Weaving: Glass Bottles* with Kandi McGilton; *Devil's Club Processing* with Merle Hawkins; and *Introduction to Cedar Bark* with Holly Churchill.

Check out the Ketchikan Museums YouTube Channel to view presentations & more!

EXHIBITS

- Installed Featured Exhibit *On the Edge: Stories from Ketchikan's Working Waterfront* (March 2024 – January 2025)
- Continued to update interpretive panels at the Totem Heritage Center
- Produced the 2024 Native Arts Studies Program instructor and student exhibit
- Produced virtual exhibits of current and previous exhibitions available at KetchikanMuseums.org

Check out Virtual Exhibits at KetchikanMuseums.org

GRANTS

Improving artifact storage at the Tongass Historical Museum is an on-going effort. Through Museums Alaska's Collections Management Fund Grant, we secured a grant in the amount of \$19,994 to purchase two new textile cabinets to provide much needed flat storage for fragile garments, leather, and fur.

The cabinets were custom built by Delta Designs in Topeka, Kansas, and delivered to Ketchikan in the fall. They are made of powder-coated steel, a material preferred by museums because of its durability and resistance to corrosion. With the extra space, we can rearrange overcrowded boxes, unfold previously folded items, and move fragile hanging textiles to prevent irreversible damage. As the project develops, we will be inventorying the new locations, photographing textiles, and updating database records for approximately 400 objects.

KETCHIKAN HISTORIC COMMISSION

With three National Historic Districts (Downtown, Creek Street, and Stedman-Thomas), Ketchikan offers a snapshot of how a thriving, modern community honors its historic buildings. The Historic Commission serves as a facilitator for these efforts.



On the Edge opening reception guests trying their hand at tying nautical knots (above), and Christy Ruby with her dyed sea otter fur vest in *On the Edge*, 2023.2.82.1. (below).



Building Maintenance and the Streets Department moving cabinets into position at the Tongass Historical Museum (below).



In five years as the Administrative Secretary, Stacy Brainard did a bit of everything and did it extremely well (bottom left). Shellie Tabb filled the position in March and was a compassionate team player (bottom right).



Kudos go to our partners in preservation, the Pioneers of Alaska, for their commitment to restoring the city's oldest building, Pioneer Hall, and to Historic Ketchikan as they embark on saving the Yates Memorial Hospital, listed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation as one of the top 11 most endangered historic properties in the nation.

Interested in learning more? The Commission meets monthly!

KETCHIKAN MUSEUMS STAFF:

Administration:

Samantha Forsko, *Director* (Nov 2024 – Present)
Anita Maxwell, *Director* (Mar 2017 – Jun 2024)
Shellie Tabb, *Administrative Secretary* (Mar 2024 – Mar 2025)
Stacy Brainard, *Administrative Secretary* (Feb 2019 – Mar 2024)

Collections:

Hayley Chambers, *Sr. Curator of Collections*
Erika Brown, *Registrar*

Programs:

Marni Rickelmann, *Sr. Curator of Programs*
Erika Jayne Christian, *Program Coordinator*
Teresa DeWitt, *Program Assistant*
Deborah Mercy, *Museum Attendant*

Exhibits:

Ryan McHale, *Curator of Exhibits*

2024 MUSEUM ADVISORY BOARD:

Kathy Bolling, *Borough Assembly*
Tim Flanery, *Totem Heritage Center*
Janalee Gage, *City Council* (Nov 2023 - Nov 2024)
Teri Hoyt, *Vice Chair*
Chet Hugo, *Board Chair*
Gunnar Keizer
Alex Kramarczuk
Jai Mahtani, *City Council* (Nov 2024 - Present)
Alma Manabat Parker (Apr 2022 - Mar 2024)
Laurie Pool, *Secretary*
Carrie Starkey-Landis

2024 TOTEM HERITAGE CENTER ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

Gloria Burns
Kevin Clevenger
Ken Decker
Tim Flanery
Nathan Jackson
Richard Jackson



After nearly seven years as Director, Anita Maxwell left Ketchikan Museums to be closer to family in Montana. Anita's accomplishments will leave an impact on Ketchikan for years to come, including leading the Tongass Historical Museum through a long-sought renovation, directing the redesign and installation of new wayfinding maps and signs downtown and along our ports, and developing the Ketchikan Salmon Walk (above). In November, Samantha Forsko joined Ketchikan Museums as the new Director. With her combination of experience in cultural heritage leadership, strategic planning, and a commitment to preservation, we are confident that Samantha will lead Ketchikan Museums into a bright future, fostering a vibrant and inclusive community space for all (below).

