

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.

2023 photos, clockwise L-R from top: Ray Troll leading a school group through the *Cruisin' the Fossil Coastline* exhibit; Sylvia Thompson and Judy Sterns in a Cedar Bark Plaiting class; Tommy Joseph and students in the Mixed Level Carving Frontlets class; Program Assistant Teresa DeWitt giving a tour to U.S. government official Isabel Guzman, Administrator of the Small Business Administration; Sr. Curator of Collections Hayley Chambers with a short-faced bear skull; Jeanne Sande and museum visitors at the opening reception of *Cruisin' the Fossil Coastline*.



Ketchikan
MUSEUMS
TONGASS HISTORICAL MUSEUM
TOTEM HERITAGE CENTER



2023 ANNUAL REPORT



COLLECTIONS

- Accepted 103 donation offers and purchases of over 2,793 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 www.KetchikanMuseums.org
- Responded to 286 requests for research or historical photograph reproductions for a variety of personal, scholarly, and municipal projects
- Renewed the Memorandum of Agreement with the Tongass Historical Society for the care and use of their collection
- Developed Ketchikan Museums' first Collections Plan
- Produced a monthly Artifact of the Month article. Our gratitude to the staff of the Ketchikan Daily News for publishing these!

PROGRAMS & OUTREACH

- Hosted 105,762 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 10,494 visitors to Virtual Exhibits, 3,027 to Past Perfect Online, 5,146 Facebook followers, 1,683 Instagram likes or comments, 2,575 views of YouTube channel videos, and 83,683 Google map interactions.
- Thank you to our seasonal staff for being wonderful hosts to a record number of visitors: Skylar Hines, Sharri Davis, Dan Magno, Kristall Bullock and Kelli Trudeau!
- **Oral History Program** continues to look for volunteers to interview (and record!) community members. Contact Erika Jayne Christian at 907-228-2792 or erikac@ktn-ak.us to get started.
- **Museum Midday** presentations were offered on the first Thursday during the fall and winter: *Native Arts Studies Program Highlights* with Dave Ketah, Kathy Rouso and Stacey Williams; *Kayhi Native Arts: Sharing Projects and Learning Together* with Debbie McLavey and students; *Cruisin' the Fossil Coastline* with Ray Troll, Dr. Pat Druckenmiller and Jim Baichtal; *Commemorating the Last 100 Years* with PeaceHealth, *Historic Preservation Month* with the Historic Commission; *Our Way - a Parallel History: Native History, Reflection, and Story* with Julie Cajune and Norma Shorty; *Using Alaska Fossils to Create Functional Art* with Boyd Porter of Alaska Fossil Knives; *Stewardship and Citizen Science on Public Land* with Michelle Gray
- **47th-48th Annual Native Arts Studies Program:** *Intermediate/Advanced Cedar Bark Material Prep* with Holly Churchill; *Intermediate/Advanced Cedar Bark Weaving* with Holly Churchill; *Introduction to the Woodshop* with Steve Thomas;



Seal skin doll made by Lydia Charles. The donor's father, David Allen, was a physician with Indian Health Services from 1969 to 1971. While he was based in Ketchikan, he frequently traveled to Prince of Wales Island. The donor found a letter from her mother had sent to her grandmother writing about Lydia Charles and how the doll was received. It was an exchange with Allen for 100 pounds of flour. Lydia Charles was Haida and lived in Hydaburg. 2023.2.17.1



Panorama of the now defunct mining community of Hadley on Prince of Wales Island, circa 1905. Photographer is unknown. 2023.2.27.1 (cropped)



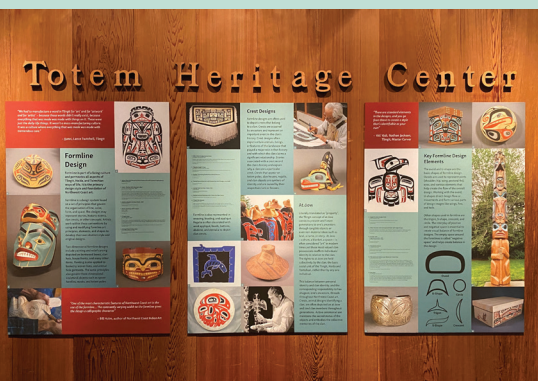
Intermediate/Advanced Cedar Bark Plaiting students with instructor Kandi McGilton.



Boyd Porter discussing Alaska fossils during a Museum Midday at the Museum.



Margaret Lynne's quilt *Aboriginal Squares* and Robert Gilmon's *Ford Tractor* in the *Ketchikan at the Fair* exhibit.



New interpretive panels about formline design at the Totem Heritage Center.



Two silver pieces by Norman Jackson: a 2017 Killer Whale pendant, 2023.2.81.1 (above), and a 2023 Raven and Coho bracelet 2023.2.81.2 (below).



Intermediate/Advanced Carving: Frontlets with Tommy Joseph; *Chilkat-style Formline Design* with Steve Brown; *Beaded Applique* with Janice Jackson; *Mixed Level Regalia: High-Top Moccasins* with Debbie McLavey; *Spring Break Youth Cedar Bark Weaving* with Holly Churchill; *Spring Break Youth Regalia: Tunics* with Janice Jackson; *Intermediate/Advanced Cedar Bark Plaiting* with Kandi McGilton; and *Cedar Bark Harvesting* with Debbie McLavey

[Check out the Ketchikan Museums YouTube Channel to view presentations & more!](#)

EXHIBITS

- Hosted the Ketchikan version of Ray Troll's traveling exhibit, *Cruisin' the Fossil Coastline* (March 2023 - January 2024)
- Updated interpretative panels at the Totem Heritage Center
- Featured traveling *Haida Rising* photography exhibit (May - September)
- Produced *Ketchikan at the Fair* (August 22 - September 16), featuring local art and crafts from the Southeast Alaska Fair
- Produced 2023 Totem Heritage Center Native Arts Studies Program Instructor & Student exhibit
- Produced *Taking Flight* virtual exhibit featuring Ketchikan's Commercial Aviation history (1922-1973) in partnership with Don Dawson and Chuck Slagle. Future installments pending.

[Check out Virtual Exhibits at KetchikanMuseums.org](#)

GRANTS

- Museums Alaska provided Alaska Art funds to purchase two pieces of engraved silver jewelry from master artist, Norman Jackson. One piece is a Killer Whale pendant that is a modern, abstracted evolution of a more traditional Tlingit-style Killer Whale formline design. The second piece is a more traditional Raven with Coho Salmon cuff bracelet.
- Alaska Art Funds were also awarded for the purchase of Christy Ruby's "DaKl'aweidi" sea otter fur vest, featured in her solo exhibit, "From Bullet to Blanket: The Journey of Sea Otter and Seal to Apparel" at the Ketchikan Area Arts and Humanities Council's Main Street Gallery. The exhibit walked viewers through the process of hunting marine mammals, processing the hides, designing and patterning, and hand-sewing the hides into apparel.
- Thank you to Museums Alaska and to the Rasmuson Foundation for their support of the Alaska Art Fund, which provides much needed funds to Alaska museums for the purchase of local art.
- Museums Alaska's Collections Management Fund granted \$19,994 for two specialized cabinets to provide flat storage for fragile textiles.

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.
- 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:

Anita Maxwell, *Director*

Stacy Brainard, *Administrative Secretary*

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*

2023 MUSEUM ADVISORY BOARD:

Gloria Burns, *Totem Heritage Center*

Janalee Gage, *City Council*

Teri Hoyt, *Vice Chair*

Chet Hugo, *Board Chair*

Gunnar Keizer

Alex Kramarczuk

Austin Otos, *Borough Assembly*

Alma Manabat Parker

Laurie Pool, *Secretary*

Jeanne Sande

Carrie Starkey-Landis

Thank you to Michele Zerbetz Scott, our long-time Board Chair, for her many years of service to the Museum Advisory Board!

2023 TOTEM HERITAGE CENTER ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

Gloria Burns

Kevin Clevenger

Ken Decker

Tim Flanery

Nathan Jackson

Richard Jackson



Dyed sea otter fur vest, "DaKl'aweidi" made by Christy Ruby, 2023, 2023.2.82.1.



Teresa DeWitt giving a virtual tour to students at North Pole High School. After joining our staff as a seasonal tour guide in 2015, Teresa was hired as the Museum Attendant in 2017. Teresa was recently promoted to be the Program Assistant and brings a wealth of knowledge to the position. Congratulations, Teresa!



Welcome to Deborah Mercy! Deborah hit the ground running as the Museum Attendant at the beginning of the cruise ship season. Her vast experience as a media specialist and photographer has been an incredible asset, as is her positive spirit! Deborah Mercy, right, with seasonal tour guides Keli Trudeau, left, and Skylar Hines, center.