



Alaska History News

Volume 42, No. 3 Quarterly of the Alaska Historical Society Autumn 2014

Message from the President—“...voices of the past will continue to be heard.”

DEAR AHS MEMBERS:

It has been my honor to serve as president of the Alaska Historical Society this past year (for a second time) with such great people. It is reassuring to have witnessed the enormous dedication so many of you reveal in our unending efforts to preserve and educate the public about Alaska and its cultural past. Over the past year I have learned that Alaska history still matters. At times, decisions were made that indicated the contrary. But as Alaskans come together to mark significant anniversaries such as the end of the Cold War, the Anchorage centennial, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson's 75th anniversary, and the Alaska purchase sesquicentennial, it is clear that the voices of the past will continue to be heard. Some say such celebratory events lack academic rigor and lasting scholarship. The value of such events, however, is to spark interest and inspire. For those of you who are cultural resource practitioners, professional historians, educators—or anyone who simply loves Alaska, my message to you is to reach out to the next generation and bring them enthusiastically into our fold. Rather than simply be observers, make them feel as though they are participants in Alaska's story. Like our kin, the archaeologists, we are just beginning to scratch the surface as to what we know about Alaska's history. Alaska is no longer the “end of the road,” “last frontier,” or “bridge to nowhere.” We are the bridge, connecting people and places of the Pacific Rim and the Circumpolar North in the past and today. So instead of just remembering the voices of history, let's strive to make them relevant to those who are listening today.

Many thanks to you all, and for all the great work that you do every day,
Katie Ringsmuth, President



http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clear_Air_Force_Station#/media/File:SSPARS_radar,_Clear_AFB.JPG

The 11-story tall Solid-State Phased Array Radar System (post Cold War missile warning system), Clear Air Force Station, Alaska.

Notes from around the state



Left to right: Inger Jensen, Debbie Vickery, Jane Vickery, and Ole Jensen. *Kennecott Kids: Interviews with the Children of Kennecott*. Courtesy National Park Service.

“..and so it is all the wonderful memories remain and the hard times are forever forgotten...”

—Inger Jensen Riccci

Summer was its usual busy self at the **McCarthy-Kennicott Historical Museum**. Lots of emphasis on children during July. A historian took children on a walking tour of the downtown to learn what it was like to be a kid when the mine was operating. Sounds like an idea worth copying. There is also a good article on the old Kennicott Hospital ; with a request for more information on patients, building, etc. Email at cernw2011@gmail.com



Every historical society's museum in Alaska needs extra volunteers in the summer, but here is an amazing spread. The **Hope and Sunrise Historical Society** asks - Can you help: Play your instrument at the museum, cut firewood, pick weeds, or be a museum host sub? Who could resist? Latest word - busy programs all summer, closed after Labor Day. A local enterprising sort made a 12 episode video titled *Kenai Mountains - Turnagain Arm National Heritage Area* narrated by three local high school students. Little places can have astonishing sophistication. Check the video out at www.kmtacorrido.org or go to www.hopeandsunrisehistoricalsociety.org.

The **Gastineau Channel Historical Society** newsletter continues its focus on Judge James Wickersham, resident of Juneau from 1920 until his death in 1939, with the exception of one year he was away as Territorial Delegate to Congress. This issue has much about Lockie MacKinnon family's friendship and business dealings with the judge. The newsletter also includes photographs and information of this year's work to restore the lantern room in the Sentinel Island Lighthouse. Send money to help and it will be matched: P.O. Box 21264, Juneau, Alaska 99802.

Another issue of the newsletter has a good article on the history of the gold finds in Douglas and Juneau along with information on Michael S. Hudson and other early important miners and politicians. Lots of photographs, including an early compressor, early claims, labor unions, and of the military brought in during strikes. This is a well-researched article; fourteen large pages with a bibliography. An added plus are some cartoons of famed artist Rie Munoz when she worked at the local newspaper.

Notes from around the state

"If you start throwing hedgehogs under me, I shall throw a couple of porcupines under you."

—Nikita Khrushchev



"So how does [porcupine] taste? Supposedly...weirdly good. It has been described as being 'like duck meat, but with more flavour and very crunchy.'"

myths-made-real.blogspot.com/2013/01/they-actually-eat-that-porcupine.html

Far right, top: Replica of Thorne River basket, Prince of Wales Island, woven by Dolores Churchill. Bottom: technical drawing of the original 6,100 BP basket fragment by Margaret Davidson. From *Arrous and All Atls* by James Dixon. Courtesy National Park Service.

August 28 is a big date for Seward. It marks the founding of the town in 1903 and this year, the 111th anniversary of the landing party of the steamer *Santa Ana* at the head of Resurrection Bay. The newsletter of the **Resurrection Bay Historical Society** tells us all about it. They're also happy about a new sign for L. V. Ray Peak, the local mountain named for an early prominent citizen. A generous grant will help the University of Rochester digitize the extensive records of the William H. Seward family. That's nice, you say, while scratching your head. Aha! the City of Seward reports this good news. There is also news repeated from the 1989 Exxon *Valdez* oil spill. The society is seeking more information on Jack Johnson who had a car sales business in Seward and a mall in Soldotna in 1962. If you know anything, write RBHS, Post Office Box 55, Seward, 99664 or email rbhs1903@gmail.com. As usual, the reader is also treated to local news from long ago. It seems August 28, 1910 was a blowout; a roadhouse booth dispensed bacon and beans, porcupine, dried salmon and sourdough bread in the hall, which was decorated with bear skins and other furs and presided over by a young man with luxuriant whiskers. And the group is preparing for the annual joint Alaska Historical Society and Museums Alaska conference October 1-4. Can't help but wonder if the roadhouse theme will be repeated.

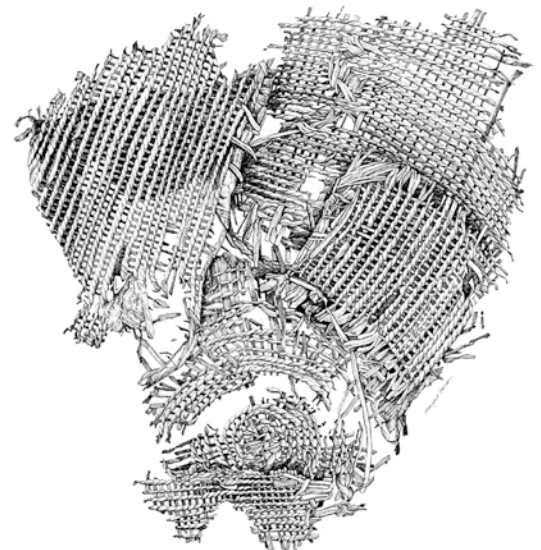
Trying to get a display place, also known as a museum, for your historical society? The latest issue of the **Ketchikan Museums** newsletter of the Tongass Historical Museum and Totem Heritage Center explains how they transitioned. Community and individual support and exhibits to make the town feel proud is what you do. There's also the tale of the Super Beaver and photographs of youth programs and the information on the Native Arts studies program. The Totem Heritage Center has set its fall classes, workshops, and seminars in Northwest Coast Native art and culture. Something for all ages and levels of skills.

Port Alexander may be a very small community on Baranof Island, its glory days of fishing well behind it, but eager volunteers celebrated its centennial. The current **Port Alexander Historical Society** newsletter has a charming recollection of growing up in the town with photos to illustrate. There is also a new book, *Port Alexander, A Centennial Celebration 1913-2013*; \$38.00 including shipping. More details

at karenjeanlucas@yahoo.com or 224 Katlian St., Sitka, Alaska 99835.

The **Tanana-Yukon Historical Society's** first program of the 2014-2015 season was the dedication of the Polaris public art sculpture. Bagpipes and a string band performed and nine signs about historic Fairbanks were previewed at the event September 17th.

Berry basket and basket maker, Tlingit warrior garb, a hands-on museum loan program; all in the day's work for the **Sheldon Jackson Museum** of Sitka, but the big news is the decision to change from collecting only ethnographic material made before 1930 to collecting contemporary art. A big step, but they have already had a generous donation that enabled them to buy ten fine new pieces from Alaska Native artists.



Notes from around the state



http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lighthouse_on_Eldred_Rock,_Alaska.jpg

Eldred Rock Lighthouse, August 27, 2009. Photograph by Arthur Chapman.

"Eldred Rock is the oldest, standing original Alaskan lighthouse building. The octagonal building is constructed of huge timbers brought to the island by the US Government in 1905. The light was situated 91 feet above sea level and had a range of more than 15 miles. The fog signal was a first order, compressed air siren. In addition to the lighthouse and quarters, there is a boathouse, tramways and other small outbuildings used for storage and maintenance.

"First lit on June 1, 1906 and one of the remotest lighthouses in North America, the Eldred Rock Lighthouse was built after some disastrous shipwrecks in the vicinity, especially during the 1898 Gold Rush, when the Lynn Canal was full of steamships bringing miners to Skagway for their climb over Chilkoot Pass."

Sheldon Museum & Cultural Center: Historical Vignettes, <http://www.sheldonmuseum.org/Vignettes/eldredrock.htm>

The **Sheldon Museum** in Haines had another busy, busy summer. A working model of the Eldred Rock Lighthouse was donated in May, along with historical letters, a bucking saw, and amusing postcards from Jeff Brown of Juneau. A class on flintknapping, a summer camp, various appreciation parties, a totem trot walk or run fundraiser, and working to raise funds to purchase a scrimshaw mammoth ivory carving. Whew!



Last fall's chief exhibit at the Anchorage Museum was *Dena'inaq Huch'ulyeshi; The Dena'ina Way of Living* the **Pratt Museum** newsletter reports, and a substantial part of the exhibit traveled to Homer and will proceed to Kenai and Fairbanks. In Homer the exhibit was enhanced by local scholars and tradition bearers, as this is a home to the Dena'ina people as well as the Sugpiaq. And again, there is serious research being done on the culture. Kachemak Bay has an amazing history.

The Baranov quarterly newsletter of the **Kodiak Historical Society** writes about the 1964 Earthquake and the Exxon *Valdez* Oil Spill of 1989. Photographs illustrate the quake reminiscences.



There's also a clever idea when entertaining young scholars - give them chalk and ask them to draw their favorite museum object on the sidewalk. The **Alutiiq Museum and Archaeological Repository**, also in Kodiak, not only did that it reported on weaving classes, and its project to preserve and promote the Alutiiq language.



A dance is a ho-hum fundraiser, but dinner cruises are very nice. Helped even more by The Boat Company a conservation group devoted to Southeast Alaska, the **Cape Decision Lighthouse Society** was able to make drinking water safe, restore windows, paint, and generally continue to get its lighthouse in fine condition.

Notes from around the state

The **Cook Inlet Historical Society** has established the Reeder-Davies Grant Program and the deadline for applications this year is October 31st. The Brian Davies Memorial Grant for Alaska History is for creative projects and research that makes a significant contribution to the study of Alaska history. The John Reeder Memorial Travel Grant is to help conduct research in a library or archives in Alaska. Details about the grants and information on how to apply are at <http://www.cookinlethistory.org/reeder-davies-scholarships.html>.



Are you interested in serving on the **Museum Collections Advisory Committee**? The committee reviews and approves donations, acquisitions, and deaccessions for the Alaska State Museum and Sheldon Jackson Museum. Terms are for three years, and meetings are by teleconference. If interested, send an email or letter and a resume by October 24, 2014 to Addison Field, addison.field@alaska.gov, Alaska State Museum, 395 Whittier St., Juneau, AK 99801-1718.



The **Anchorage Museum** is updating and redesigning its Alaska Gallery. The planners

have selected “encounters” to connect the exhibit. This theme will help the museum explore the arrivals and departures of people through Alaska’s history and their interactions with the land and the people already here. Katie Ringsmuth and Aaron Leggett are asking Alaskans to share their stories about coming to Alaska and making a home. They have scheduled public events: Growing Up in Alaska on October 14, At Work in Alaska on October 28, and At Play in Alaska on December 2. In addition to stories, participants are encouraged to bring images and artifacts. More information is to be found at AKG@anchagemuseum.org or phone 907-929-9287.



The **Alaska Women’s Hall of Fame** is inviting nominations for its Class of 2015. The intent is to recognize women who have made significant contributions to Alaska communities, the state, or nationally. The organization’s website has biographies of over 100 women that provide background information and are very helpful for researchers, writers, and students. Nominations are due November 1st using the form available at alaskawomenshalloffame.org. For more information call 907-279-4836.

*“The survivors would
envy the dead.”*

—Nikita Khrushchev

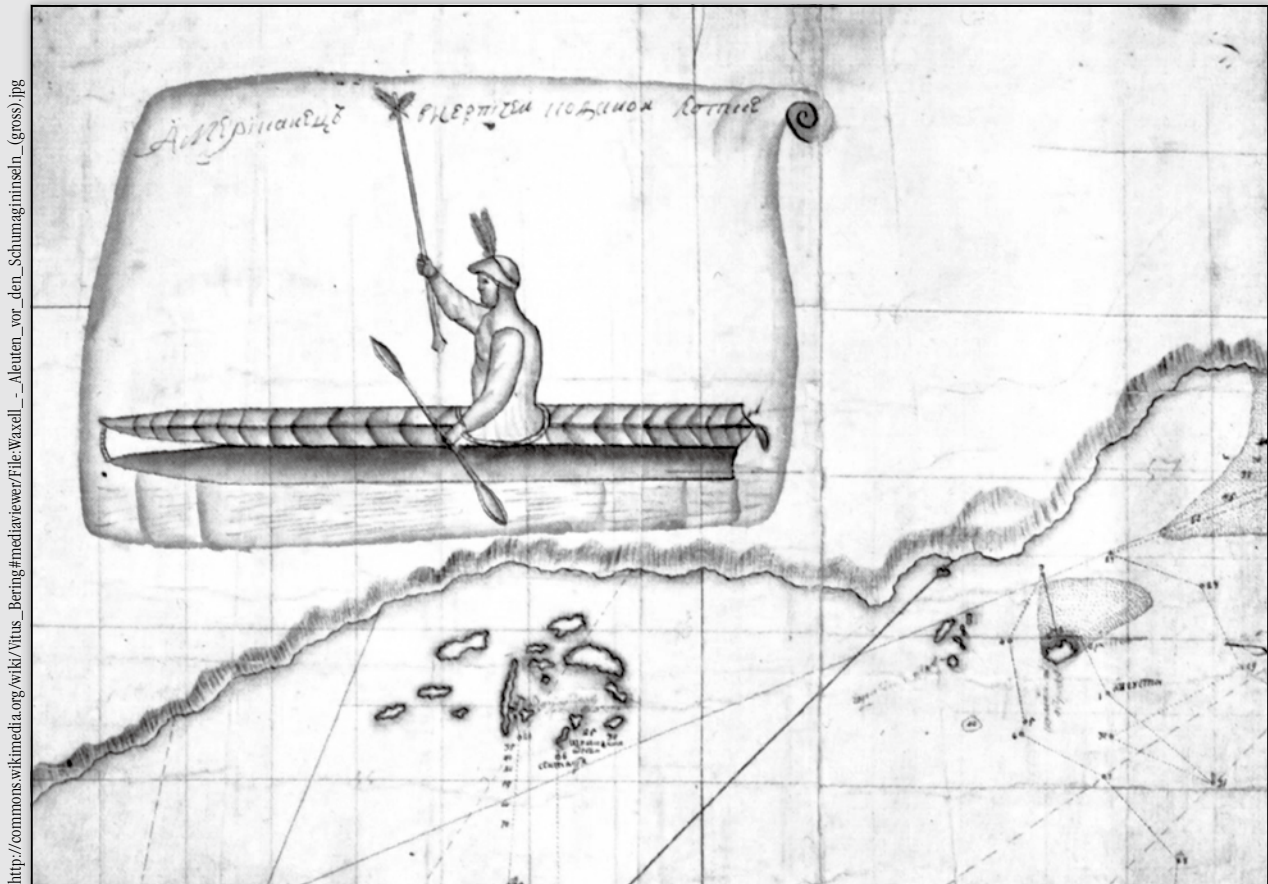
*“The Cold War isn't
thawing; it is burning
with a deadly heat.
Communism isn't
sleeping; it is, as
always, plotting,
scheming, working,
fighting.”*

—Richard M. Nixon

Distant Early Warning Line (DEW)
Station POW-3, Bullen Point, Prudhoe
Bay, Alaska. Library of Congress Prints &
Photographs Online Catalog, Historic American
Buildings Survey, HABS AK-201-4.



News & Information



[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Vitus_Bering#mediaviewer/File:Waxell_-_Aleuten_vor_den_Shumagininseln_\(gross\).jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Vitus_Bering#mediaviewer/File:Waxell_-_Aleuten_vor_den_Shumagininseln_(gross).jpg)

Sketch of an "Aleut at Shumagin Island" by Sven Waxell, mate of the *St. Peter* captained by Vitus Jonassen Bering, Second Kamchatka Expedition, 1741.

Anna Koritansky sent an email last summer telling the Society about the unfortunate delay of a Russian tall ship visit planned for 2015 as an Anchorage centennial event. A small yacht, the *Karaana*, with a six-member crew, however, came in August. Her captain is Professor Lisenko, a mentor of the famous Fedor Konyukhov. The professor has sailed around the world since 1974. In September of 2007 he laid a wreath in Japan at Tsushima Island as part of the United Nations International Peace Day. The Alaska voyage traced Vitus Bering's route. *Karaana* planned stops at Dutch Harbor, Nagai in the Shumagin Islands, Kodiak, Anchorage, Cordova, and Sitka before proceeding on to San Francisco. The plan was to erect a small memorial board in Nagai in honor of Bering's sailor who died there. For more information, http://konyukhov.ru/en/news/fedor_konyukhov_rounded_cape_horn.html (be sure to separate the words as shown).

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Aron Crowell, Director of the Alaska Office of the Arctic Studies Center of the National Museum of Natural History, is the recipient of the Smithsonian's Education Achievement Award. He recognized Dawn Biddison for her work in Anchorage. Want to check out the Arctic Studies Center Newsletter? Go to www.mnh.si.edu/arctic

The **Fairbanks Community/Dog Museum** has had to change location, but has moved to the Co-Op Building downtown. They figure on opening there this fall. Website is <http://fairbankshistorymuseum.com>. Visit them and enjoy!

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It would not be surprising if the **Friends of the Alaska State Libraries, Archives, and Museums** were on vacation as the new facility is under construction. Not that doughty bunch. The current newsletter ranges from a visit to the State Historical Library to how to get records online for easier research to the history of the Old Witch Totem in the atrium of the State Office Building. Something for everyone.

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The work digitizing old tapes of Thlingit oral history and having Native speakers listen and translate them is one reason the **Sealaska Heritage Institute** won a prized award from the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums. Congratulations!

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And, of course, all the news you need about historic preservation in Alaska is found in the monthly *Heritage* news from the **Alaska Office of History and Archaeology**. Contact Jo Antonson, , mail or visit 550 West 7th Ave, Suite 1310, Anchorage, Alaska, 99501-3565 or telephone 907-269-8721 to be added to the subscription list.

News & Information

No AHS newsletter would be complete without a mention of the group that enables old-timers from Alaska and the Yukon to stay in touch; the **Alaska Yukon Pioneers** monthly newsletters. Cost is a mere annual \$20.00. Contact Joyce Penman, Recorder, at 27833 85th Drive, Stanwood, Washington, 98292, telephone 253-709-0158 or 360-629-3554, or email olwomn@wavecable.com.

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The newsletter of the **Alaska Railroad Corporation** tells us the legislature provided \$30 million for new technology, plus \$13 million for the Port MacKenzie Rail Extension, \$3 million for a safety crossing at Girdwood, and \$375,000 for drainage improvement in the Municipality of Anchorage. The longest bridge in Alaska, 3,300 feet with 19 piers, was finished this summer on time and within budget. It crosses the Tanana River near Salcha and combines a levee with the bridge. With this happy outcome, all sorts of legislators, the governor, etc. were pleased to attend the ribbon cutting!

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Ronald Inouye sent this plea. "The recent passing of Dick Dauenhauer reminds us how vitality, focus, and dedication are also tempered. I'm requesting the names, photos and bios of others who have been active in AHS and Museums Alaska and passed away since our last conference for inclusion in the annual conference memorials. Please send me names and brief bios with photo. Contact me by e-mail (rinouye@gci.net) or phone (474-9403). -Thanks."

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Sitka celebrates its 18th Whalefest November 6-9, 2014. A wonderful blend of local and scientific knowledge complete with workshops and general gala. Go to sitkawhalefest@gmail.com with queries.

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Want to learn more about the activities of Alaska's museums? Well, then you need to go to museumsalaska.org, the **Museums Alaska** website for all sorts of fun there. And don't forget the joint meeting of the AHS and Museums Alaska in Seward, October 1- 4 this year. Over 150 people have registered! Always the family feeling.

Visit our website:

www.alaskahistoricalociety.org



We welcome your letters, news and pictures. Please send them to the editor:
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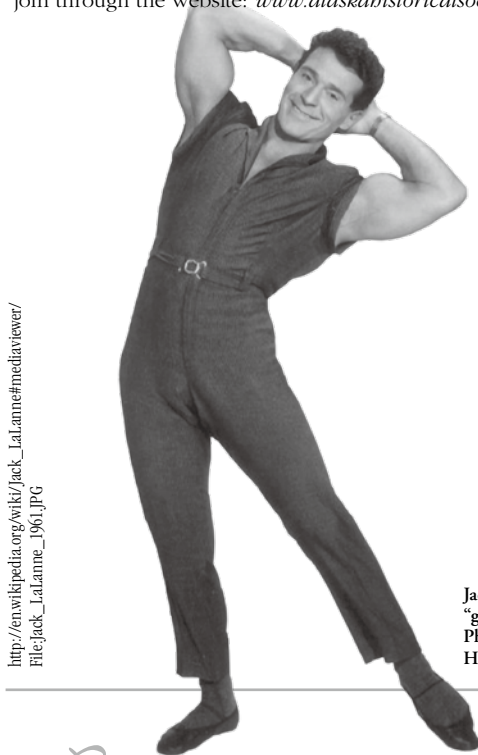
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It's quick, it's easy, and you receive the semiannual *Alaska History*, the quarterly newsletter *Alaska History News*, and discounts on publications.

As interest and writing on Alaska history seem to be sprouting like fireweed in the spring, a useful and popular book is the society's *The Alaska 67* with annotated recommendations of good books on Alaska history. Order it through the website!

Send your application for membership to Alaska Historical Society, P.O. Box 100299, Anchorage, Alaska 99510-0299; or join through the website: www.alaskahistoricalociety.org.



http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jack_LaLanne#mediaviewer/File:Jack_LaLanne_1961.jpg

Jack LaLanne, the
"godfather of fitness."
Photograph by Cliff Riddle,
Hollywood, 1961.

Self-help books have sold well for a very long time. One reason is, of course, because who wouldn't like to make yourself better? And all in the privacy of your living room or wherever you're reading it. So you'll be pleased to have some self-help tips (too busy to write a book) free, from your trusty editor.

No 1. - If you have three things to do, two of them easy and one hard, do the hard one first. Otherwise, you'll be worrying about it while you're working. In addition, you will feel so pleased and proud of yourself when you've finished the tough one, the other two will slip by in no time.

No. 2 - If you feel you are not physically attractive, buy a hat or something that will attract attention, then wear it. You will quickly become accustomed to being stared at and discover that's not so bad after all. Learn to enjoy the looks.

No. 3 - Write down your good experiences in the form of a self-help book. If you also lecture, remember to set up a dummy corporation that buys your book, the more copies the better. When it hits the bestseller list, the money you have spent makes it all worthwhile, as you can double your speakers' fees. (The last tip I read years ago as I was wondering why bestseller business books usually were very, very slow to sell second-hand.)

So there you go. All set now. You're welcome.

D. L.