

Alaska History News

Volume 40, No. 2 Quarterly of the Alaska Historical Society July 2012



Call for 2012 Alaska Historical Society Awards and Board of Directors nominations

(Above) Senator Gruening presents a \$1,000 defense bond award to 14-year-old Grant B. Walther, Anchorage high school student, as 1st prize in the national science contest, "Why I want to be a Scientist." Grant's father, Harold V. Walther (left) was present, as was Harold M. Porter (right), President of the Porter Chemical Company, which sponsored the contest. Image taken August 25, 1959.

Ernest H. Gruening Papers, UAF-1976-21-941

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he Alaska Historical Society is seeking nominations for its annual awards and nominations to serve on its board of directors.

First, the awards. Members are encouraged to nominate individuals and groups which have notably contributed to the knowledge, preservation, and understanding of Alaskan or local history the past year. Nominations can be made by letter or can be submitted electronically, but must document the individual's or group's significant contribution.

The **Esther Billman Award of Excellence** is given to a state or local society, museum, government agency, or other organization which has completed a project or series of projects contributing to the preservation and understanding of Alaskan history during the past year. Esther Billman's efforts to preserve Alaska history and develop the Sheldon Jackson Museum are commemorated by the award now given in her name.

The **Evangeline Atwood Award** is given to an individual in recognition of significant long-term contributions to Alaska state or local history. Evangeline Atwood's promotion and practice of the study and publication of Alaska history, as well as her efforts to organize historical societies including the Alaska Historical Society, are commemorated with this award.

Call for 2012 Alaska Historical Society Awards and Board of Directors nominations

The **Historian of the Year Award** is given to an *Alaska resident* for publication of significant new material about Alaska's past during the past year. The society initiated this award in 1974. *Nominations must include a copy of the publication for review.*

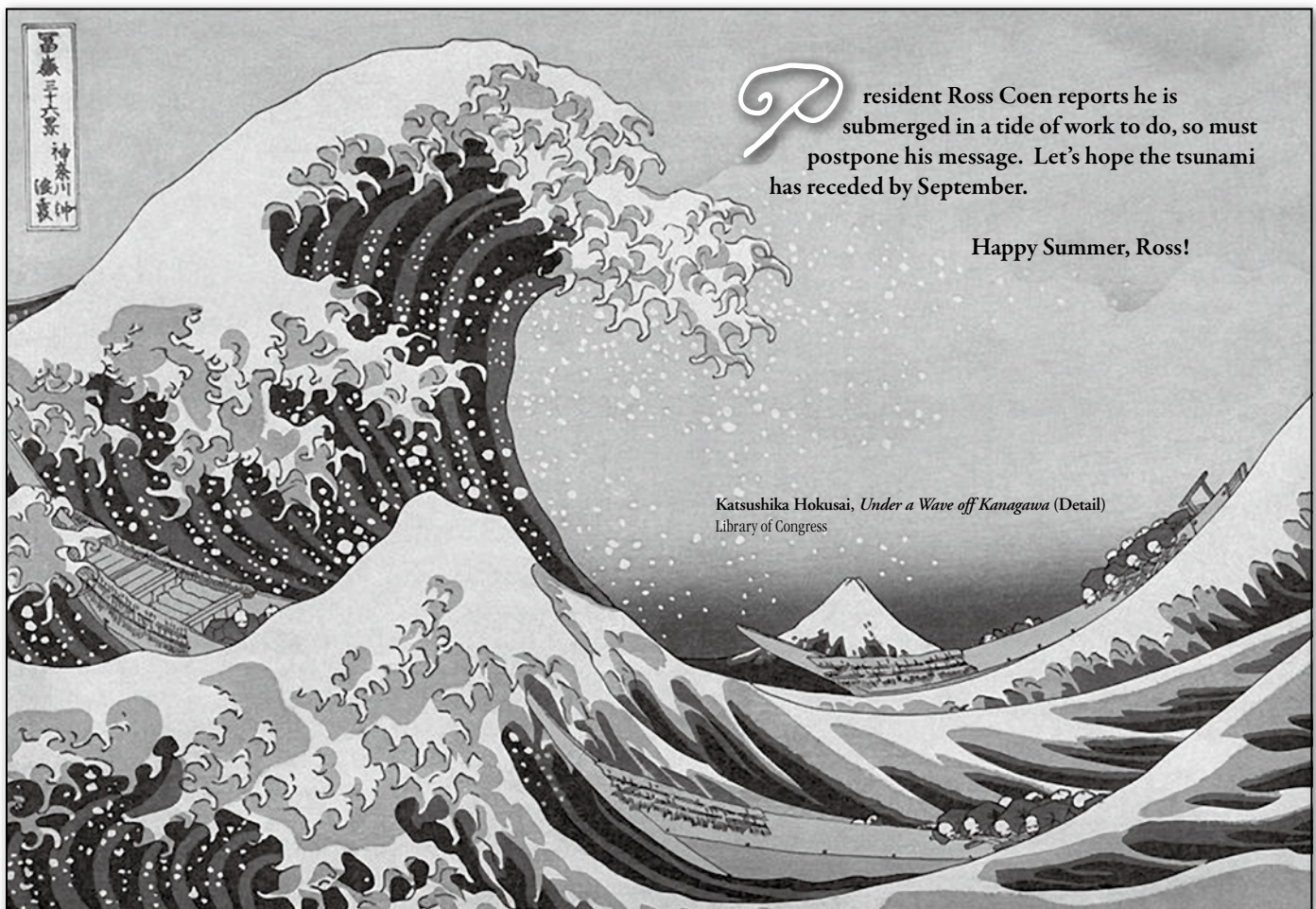
The **Pathfinder Award** is given to an individual or several individuals who have indexed or prepared guides to Alaska historical material that has not been accessible. *Nominations for this award must include sample pages of the index or guide.*

The **Elva R. Scott Local Historical Society Newsletter Award** is given for the best newsletter published by a local historical society over the past several years. Elva Scott served as editor of the *Eagle Wireless* for many years, making the people and historic events of the community widely known. *Representative copies of the newsletter must be submitted with the nomination.*

The **Contributions to Alaska History Award** recognizes an individual or individuals who have made a singular and significant recent contribution to Alaska history.

The Alaska Historical Society is governed by a fifteen-member **Board of Directors**. Directors are elected to three-year terms and are limited to two consecutive terms. The terms are staggered. Five terms expire each year. Directors generally meet six times a year. They meet "face-to-face" at the Society's annual meeting and usually by teleconference the remainder of the year. The directors set policies and oversee operations of the organization. They annually elect the Society's officers. Each director usually heads one of the Society's committees such as membership, publications, newsletter, advocacy, annual meeting program, and awards.

NOMINATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY FRIDAY, AUGUST 31, 2012. Please send them to: Mike Hawfield, Chair, Awards and Nominations Committee, Alaska Historical Society P.O. Box 100299, Anchorage, AK 99510-0299. E-mail: akhist@gci.net or inmch@kpc.alaska.edu. Ballots for the Board of Directors election will be mailed to members in September. The awards and results of the election will be announced at the Alaska Historical Society and Museums Alaska banquet at the annual meetings and conference in Sitka in October.



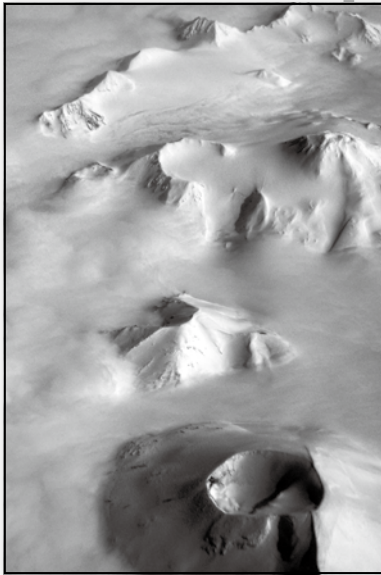
Resident Ross Coen reports he is submerged in a tide of work to do, so must postpone his message. Let's hope the tsunami has receded by September.

Happy Summer, Ross!

Katsushika Hokusai, *Under a Wave off Kanagawa* (Detail)
Library of Congress

Notes from around the state

A session of the AHS/MA conference will commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Novarupta eruption.



(Above) Korovin and Kliuchef Volcanoes, Atka Island, May 31, 2012. Photograph by Cyrus Read.
Image courtesy of AVO/USGS

Registration for the **annual conference and annual meetings of AHS and Museums Alaska**, to be held this year at Sitka, October 10-13, is open. The AHS Conference theme is "Alaska on the World Stage." For a list of presentations, full conference schedule, registration and travel information, go to www.alaskahistoricalsociety.org or contact Anjuli Grantham, Program Chair, anjuligrantham@gmail.com.

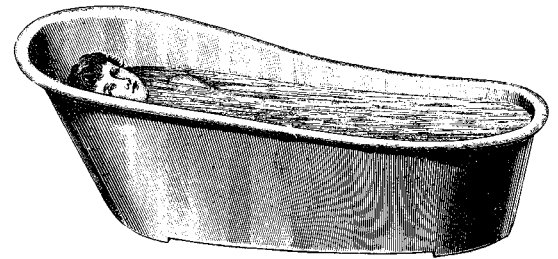


2012 is much more than the current year for Seward, the **Resurrection Bay Historical Society** reports. In May of 1912 the city incorporated. 160 voted for and 31 against. Thirteen men vied for the seven-member council; votes ranged from 137 down to 49. Interesting that Dr. J. H. Romig, written about as worshipped in town, garnered 79 votes. Perhaps the town worshipped him as a physician, not a councilor.

The "Trail Blazers" bronze statue showing a prospector and his dog heading out for Iditarod was dedicated in early May. A fine occasion; major contributors thanked, the Trail Blazer president, the mayor and others spoke, and 200 Seward Elementary School students sang. Sounds great, but there's a question. Of course we know the *Alaska Flag Song* but could someone send along the music and words to the *Iditarod Song* for us? Twenty-five miniature statuettes are for sale; \$3,000 plus shipping. Call Dan Seavey at 907/224-3518.



Speaking of anniversaries, the **Tenakee Historical Collection** newsletter reports their 10th is this year. They have a summer intern to help with the museum. Tenakee's life has always revolved around the hot springs so they were excited to find the original CCC drawings for the *Bath House Alterations and Additions* from 1939. It seems the rather elaborate plans were never fully built. A local builder found them in the summer of 2011 in a pool beneath the current changing room. Nothing like a bit of local archaeology!



A survey was done this school year by the local students. They devised their own questions; the editor of the newsletter had two favorites: "Who was the most interesting person you met in the bath?" and "What is the grossest thing you have seen in the bath?" We can see why she loved them. If you would like to read interesting 1901 letters from Killisnoo or read of the Tenakee murder in 1913, send \$5.00 to the group at Post Office Box 633, Tenakee Springs, Alaska, 99841, or for \$15.00 become a member. Questions: tkehx@juno.com or telephone editor Vicki Wisenbaugh at 907/736-2243.



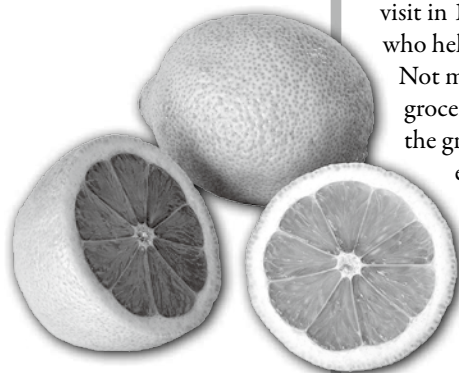
Looking forward to another good summer are the **McCarthy-Kennicott Museum** and its cousin, the **Wrangell Mountains Center**. The nice blend of mining history, the Copper River and Northwestern Railway, the Ahtna Indians, spectacular scenery leading to art and photography - all lead to a fascinating tour for those who visit the area. There's no internet address in the recent newsletter, but Googling the names leads to lots of information. There's also a nice article, with photographs, about the area in the May **National Trust for Historic Preservation** newsletter. In 1990 the old mine was listed by them as one of the most endangered historic sites in the United States. The article recounts how it was saved. For copies, www.preservationsnation.org or telephone 800/315-6847.

Notes from around the state



Mrs. Gilford Lemon standing among corn stalks on her farm in Matanuska Valley, Alaska, 1936. Photographed by Almer J. Peterson.

Archives and Special Collections, Consortium Library, University of Alaska Anchorage



Lemonade is thought to be an Egyptian original—at least according to the earliest documentary evidence. Sources say that lemon juice mixed with sugar was sold ca. 1104 in a Jewish community in the Egyptian city of Cairo.

Photograph by André Karwath, 2005.

The **Chugiak-Eagle River Historical Society** could also be called the “Cooking Society”. The latest recipe is a basic for Alaskan cooks. *Sourdough Starter* tells you how to make it as well as a bit of history. They quote a Alaska survey from 1965 that asked how long homemakers’ food could hold out in an emergency. Only 17 percent of farmers (and we assume those from the lonely places) replied one to two weeks. The rest probably figured they could break out the traps and count their bullets and just keep going. Need more? cerhs.org is the place or, gasp! write them at Post Office Box 670573, Chugiak, Alaska, 99567



One of our favorite small towns in Interior Alaska is stay-in-there, rise-above-it Eagle. The **Eagle Historical Society and Museums** newsletter lived up to par. A nice thank-you letter from the winner of the annual quilt raffle included entries from his diary on his colorful visit in 1996. There’s also a thank-you to groups who helped with the society’s March fundraiser. Not many places include a shout-out to the grocery in Tok and a bush pilot who brought the groceries in to town. Go to www.eaglehistoricalsociety.com for details, and become a member.



A new museum is on the mind of the **Sitka Historical Society** newsletter editor. They also are gearing up to host our annual **Alaska Historical Society/ Museums Alaska** meeting October 10-13. Their newsletter has an interview with a Sitkan who stayed on after 18 years at the pulp mill. It closed in 1993 after operating locally 34 years. If your day is not complete without knowing more, go to sitkahistory.org



The **Sitka Maritime Heritage Society** has produced an invaluable map and guide, *Historic Sitka Harbor and Waterfront Self-Guided Tour*. Six narrow pages with photographs (mostly historic) unfolds to show a map of the waterfront. Visit www.sitkamaritime.org for more news of the society.



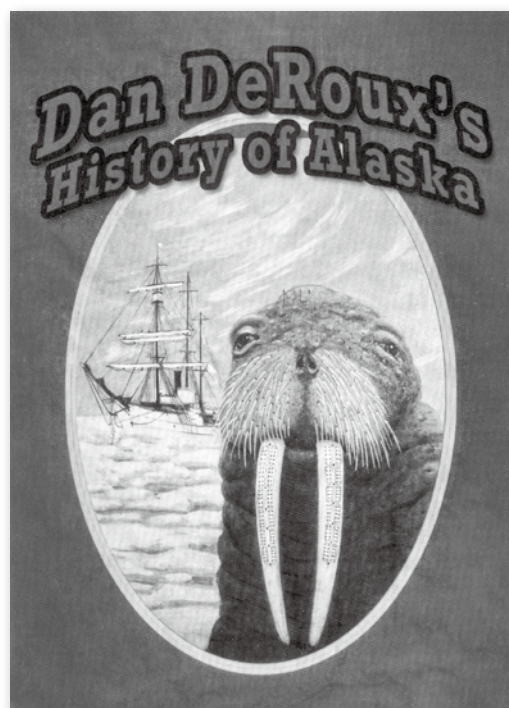
As always, the **Anchorage Museum** newsletter speaks of many summer activities from an exhibit on Mt. McKinley climbs, to local schoolchildrens’ art, to Romantic Art of the North, summer camp, contemporary art, photograph exhibits, and museum tours. If you can’t drop by and need more info, www.anchagemuseum.org.



Speaking of busy, the **Baranov Museum** newsletter reports keen interest of 3rd grade students entering the poster contest marking the centennial of the famous Mt. Novarupta eruption that resulted in a dark Kodiak for three days and deposited up to 18 inches of ash on the town. A grass basket weaving class also was held this spring. To know more about the summer exhibit, *Whaling the Kodiak Grounds*, go to www.baranovmuseum.org and put in that title.



Summer exhibits at the **Alaska State Museum** are *Kiska*, the Aleutian island still scarred by World War II, and the famous art combined with humor of Dan DeRoux. There is also the ART Room to visit. It’s geared towards children but interesting to all. It’s been featuring military uniform insignia. Try www.museum.state.ak.us if you need more news.



Notes from around the state

*When I was just a lad of ten,
my father said to me
Come here and take a lesson
from the lovely lemon tree
Don't put your faith in love,
my boy, my father said to me
I fear you'll find that love is like
the lovely lemon tree
Lemon tree, very pretty,
and the lemon flower is sweet
But the fruit of the poor lemon
is impossible to eat*

—Peter, Paul, and Mary



First Officials of Civil Government of Alaska, Organic Act of Congress, May 17, 1884. Seated: J. H. Kinkead, Governor of Alaska. Standing (left to right): Edwin W. Haskett, District Attorney; Munson C. Hillyer, U.S. Marshal; Ward McAllister, Jr., Judge; Andrew T. Lewis, Clerk of Court.

Early Prints of Alaska. Photographs, ca. 1870-1920, ASL-PCA-297

A life ring in a museum signals a possible shipwreck and tragedy. Nice to know the one in *Into the Light*, the current exhibit of recent acquisitions by Ketchikan's **Tongass Historical Museum**, was used as a prop for tourists' photographs by the first steamship cruise to the town. They also continue to lure children in with fun projects; they can be curators and cataloguers as well as inspect new acquisitions. Catch 'em young and they'll be lifelong enthusiasts. The summer exhibit is *Our Town*.

Totem Heritage Center classes are over for the summer, but Tlingit carving, weaving, and painting will be taught as usual this fall and winter. For details go to www.ketchikanmuseums.com

Saturday afternoon, August 25, at the **Wickersham House Museum** the TYHS will celebrate the centennial of the 1912 acquisition of Territorial status by Alaska, the Organic Act herded through Congress by the lone delegate from Alaska, James Wickersham. It was fought by cannery operators and other Outside commercial interests, showing some things don't change. August 24 was Wickersham's birthday and President Taft signed the Act into law on August 24, 1912. Four years later, in 1916, the delegate was unsuccessful in his attempt to provide statehood. Territorial status did not give Alaskans as much control over Alaska's natural resources as Wickersham would have liked, but it was a major step in the development of Home Rule and remained the form of government for Alaska through two World Wars until statehood became a reality.

The **Hope and Sunrise Historical Society** is off to another busy summer. The mining museum was damaged in the record snowfall, but only a crushed chimney and two problem doors. The famous saw pit, now complete with sign, is ready, the 5K race on the Wagon Trail in July, readings of Robert Service and other poets set, and other programs past the planning stage. However, the mystery of the 1950s party supplies found in the old outhouse hole during the dig last year is still unsolved. Drop by if you're on the Kenai or visit www.hopealaska.info.

The 14th Annual *Fairbanks Museums Tour* in late May was another great success the **Tanana Yukon Historical Society** reports. This year, in addition to the eight museums in town, the stained glass windows of two historic churches were added. Hmm; good idea. How about looking around your town for things to add to the annual tour? Contact tyhs@alaska.net or telephone 907/ 474-9403 if you'd like more.

The Japanese tsunami and horrid trouble at Fukushima has some odd spin-offs. Good news for the **Cape Decision Lighthouse Society**. They have a grant to transport beach volunteer clean-up crews to gather flotsam and jetsam along the coast from southern Kuiu Island as far north as Howard Cove on the Chatham Strait side and Port McArthur on the Sumner Strait side. Port Alexander on Baranof Island is the base camp. They're also working this summer with field studies of sea otters by the University of Alaska and some high-tech photo work. And yes, they are continuing work on the preservation of the lighthouse. Interested? Check out www.capedecisionlight.org or write capedecisionlighthouse@yahoo.com

The editors of the **Gastineau Channel Historical Society** newsletter had a fine idea. In 1912 there were five newspapers in Juneau and Douglas and all sorts of things were occupying the citizens. So the editors took extracts from the papers and filled 19 pages of the newsletter with the most interesting articles. All lovely, but how does your editor shorten this to fit in this issue? In 1912 the Governor's house was being built, the tunnel through Mount Roberts was being constructed, interesting crimes committed by dogs and humans (the dogs were fond of eating chickens, the humans beating up each other), a road to Thane was ready to go, various ships were in and out, and all sorts of community games, balls, carnivals, and the like entertained the towns. Since Alaska Natives were invisible in 1912, two pages in the newsletter are about the founding of the Alaska Native Brotherhood that year. If you want to read more, contact the society at ghnews@attglobal.net or read more at www.gastineauchannel.blogspot.

News & Information

Forwarded from the Alaska State Museum is a request for artifacts pertaining to **Harold McCracken** and **Edward Moffat Weyer, Jr.** and their 1928 Alaska expedition for the **American Museum of Natural History**. McCracken's books on Alaska wildlife are well known, and it's nice to know there is the McCracken Research Library in Cody, Wyoming. The museum staff are also interested in the art of Francis Lee Jaques, who designed dioramas for the American Museum based on the 1928 adventure. Contact Mary Robinson at maryr@BBHC.org if you can contribute.



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Sixteen new members of the **Alaska Women's Hall of Fame** were inducted this spring.

- * Audrey Aanes, advocate for women with disabilities
- * Gretchen Bersch, education
- * Connie Boochever, arts in Alaska
- * Carolyn Floyd, education and municipal government
- * Wilda Hudson, women's voting rights
- * Carolyn Jones, hope and change through Rotary
- * Louise Kellogg, farming, philanthropy, education
- * Ellen Paneok, first Alaska Native woman pilot
- * Sharon Richards, community leader
- * Irene Rowan, leader in Alaska Native affairs
- * Lisa Rudd, civil and women's rights
- * Susan Ruddy, conservation and community development
- * Hannah Solomon, Alaska Native concerns
- * Pauline Utter, political and women's rights
- * Rosita Worl, Tlingit culture to youth
- * Leonie von Zesch, dental services to Alaska Natives in northwestern Alaska, 1920s

If you want to know more about the program or read short biographies, visit www.alaskawomenshalloffame.org or phone Bonnie Jack at 907/279-4836.

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All the snow this winter exacerbated the moose plus railroad tracks problem. The **Alaska Railroad** newsletter writes of clearing the right-of-way, offering feeding stations, etc. There's also a piece on *Steam Engine No. 557*, the last one used in Alaska. A great deal of work is needed, but at least now it will not be scrapped. Surprised as I was to find there's a newsletter? Go to www.alaskarailroad.com, or use that quaint old method and phone 907/265-2300.

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Always fun announcing one of our members has a new book out. Katie Ringsmuth has written *Tunnel Vision - the Life of a Copper Prospector in the Nizina River Country*. You can e-mail her at katmaikate@aol.com or even call 907/644-3467.

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Chief Shakes House in Wrangell has been a historical landmark for a very long time. In 1940 it was completely restored. Now it is being renovated again, and because of its status, very carefully. Posts must be hand adzed; this time four women are included, a first for a Tlingit traditionally male job. The *Anchorage Daily News* wrote a story about the women carvers. Contact reporter Mike Dunham at mdunham@adn.com for details.

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The **Alaska Maritime Society** may be only two years old, but it has already compiled a long list of projects it has supported and undertaken. The founders and members are divers, archaeologists, and historians (several a combination), fascinated with shipwrecks and other human effects on Alaska coasts. Kodiak and Sitka, both historic ports, concentrate on local maritime history, but there's plenty to go around over all our coasts. AMS works closely with all the appropriate state and federal agencies. Google the name and you will find the group's interesting newsletter.

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June seems a fine month to hold *Frozen Pasts*, the third **International Glacial Archaeology Symposium**. It was June 3-8 in Whitehorse, Yukon. Need to know what went on? www.youkonheritage.com or get personal and e-mail ruth.gotthardt@gov.yk.ca

News & Information

The price may have gone up, but it's still well worth \$20.00 a year to join the **Alaska Yukon Pioneers** and receive the monthly newsletter. You will read about meetings in the Seattle area, but the chief joy is reading what your old neighbors and friends are up to. Checks should be made out to AYP and mailed to Joyce Penman, Recorder, 27833 85th Drive NW, Stanwood, Washington, 98292. Her e-mail is olwomn@wavecable.com

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The newsletter of the Smithsonian Institution's **Arctic Studies Center** contains a first-hand account of the shrinking of the summer sea-ice; another historic low since 2007 when large amounts of soot were seen around Wrangell Island, source unknown, but great at accelerating the melting. High officials from the Obama administration attended a conference on this last year. The 18th Inuit Studies Conference will be held in Washington, D. C. October 24-28, 2012. Thinking of going? www.mnh.si.edu/arctic/ISC18/index.html. The newsletter covers much more; the 49 pages in the current issue contain many items about Alaska yesterday and today.

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The U.S. Geological Survey, Katmai National Park and Preserve, and the Alaska Historical Society are partners commemorating the centennial of the Novarupta volcanic explosion that created the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes. There was a elementary school poster contest, and a weekly program is offered at the Anchorage Public Lands Information Center this summer. The USGS is publishing and republishing studies on the area, and there will be a session on the event at the Alaska Historical Society conference in Sitka this October.

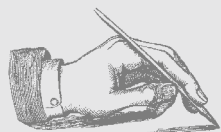
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And, of course, there is the monthly newsletter with news about historic preservation in Alaska, *Heritage*, produced by **Alaska Office of History and Archaeology**. If you want to be on the email list, contact jo.antonson@alaska.gov.

A great gift for a friend, relative, local school or library is a year's membership in the Alaska Historical Society. It's easy . . . go to the AHS website, www.alaskahistoricalociety.org and then click on "membership and giving."

Visit our website:

www.alaskahistoricalociety.org



We welcome your letters, news and pictures. Please send them to the editor:
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THE ALASKA HISTORICAL SOCIETY is on the list for those applying for the Permanent Fund Dividend. Consider using the "Pick, Click, Give" to donate. Watch your mailbox for the Society's annual auction catalog, and plan to bid outrageously to help support the Society's many programs and projects.


Become a member... or if you're already a member, sign up a friend or relative. Join the hundreds who want to stay in touch with historic Alaska by sending \$35.00 for individual membership (\$25.00 for students; \$45.00 for family.)

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.

Editor's Comments

 hat a boring word—"routine"; ordinary, limited, old fogey, stick-in-the-mud, nothing new. (I know, I know, in dance and theater it's totally different, but I want you to concentrate on the dull meaning.) "Ordinary routine" is about the best we can say for it, although that conjures up regular work, weekends doing nothing much, more work, and on and on. Dull and boring. Sitting around talking about the same old things, cooking the same meals, going to the same places over and over, hearing people say they always know where I am at any time of day as though they're clever and I'm not. It's really bad when it applies to weekends as well.

My feeble defense is "I'm reliable," but we both know better. I haven't done anything interesting in years. Wasted time. Life is passing me by. Sometimes I think of doing something outstanding, but am not sure exactly what and it's not a very large town.

Remember the old bit about being handed lemons in life, so you make lemonade? But there's no mention of water or sugar being available, let alone a lemon squeezer.

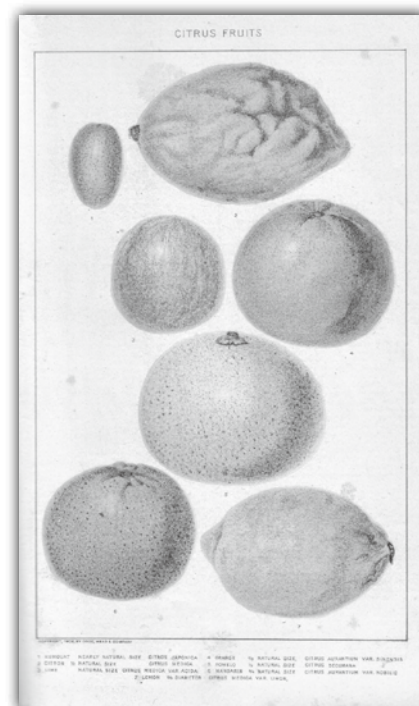
The other day, however, I had a new experience. I won't go into any detail about my agonizing back, although if you want to call will be happy to give you the details, but I had to change my usual seat in the living room. I have two small couches and sit on the flowered one closest to the television and radio and music player, set next to the bookshelves. It's the one with the comfy afghan and three nice throw pillows, and the remotes are on the end table just in front of the table lamp.

Well, I had to move across the room to the white couch with the table lamp that sometimes won't work and the light-weight afghan. The throw pillows aren't as soft either. But the position was far more accommodating to my back. I was whining to myself (I don't like to brag, but I do a great whine, even when alone), when I suddenly realized I had a new perspective. I mean actually, not mental. I saw the hall to the kitchen across the room, noticed the balanced bookcases on either side of the room, the charming corner windows, and how nice the chinese blue-and-white vase on the other end table goes with the flowered couch, as does the painting hung above it. The other painting, the abstract across the room, goes nicely as well. My living room was new.

I don't need to go into detail. I'm sure you've got it. You don't have to make big changes to get a new perspective, a new way of looking at the world, literally in this case.

The bit about the lemonade? What's wrong with rolling the lemons to soften them up, then sticking a peppermint stick in them and sucking? Easier than lemonade by far and not so messy. A new perspective.

D.L.



Citrus Fruits (#7—the lemon)