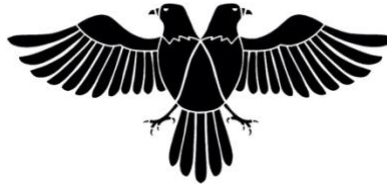


# Alaska Historical Society



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**Annual Business Meeting**  
**Alaska Historical Society**  
**Saturday, October 10, 2020**  
**Zoom**

## **Minutes**

1. **Call to order.** President Will Schneider called the meeting to order at 2 p.m. Present: William Schneider, Vice-President Rachel Mason, Treasurer Tim Troll, Secretary Angela Schmidt, Karen Brewster, Tom Bundtzen, Patuk Glenn, Ian Hartman, Erik Johnson, Averil Lerman and David Ramseur. Also present were State Historic Preservation Officer Judy Bittner and AHS Executive Director Jo Antonson. A quorum was reached. Other participants included Ray Hudson, Ron Inouye, Tom Alton, Rebecca Poulson, Mike Hawfield, Bruce Parham, Shana Loshbaugh, Bob King, Janet Matheson, Elizabeth Cook, John and Vicki Wisenbaugh, Ruth Knapman, Penelope Goforth, and Sue Sherif.

2. **Approval of September 26, 2019, minutes.** Schmidt moved to approve the minutes. Brewster seconded. All in favor. Motion approved.

3. **Financial matters.** Troll reported that AHS has operating and savings accounts at Wells Fargo, an endowment account with the Alaska Community Foundation, and a 30-year U.S. Treasury Bond designated for the Alaska History journal. He reported the following balances:

Operating account balance as of September 30, 2020: \$14,460.11

Savings account: \$7,900.32

The 30-year U.S. Treasury Bond [Sherwood endowment]: \$13,000.00

Alaska Community Foundation endowment:

Corpus: \$100,699.35

Total assets as of August 31, 2020: \$136,059.78. This is approximately \$5,400 more than last year, with growth due to endowment donations.

The 2018 IRS tax return was filed last November, and the 2019 tax return will be filed by November 15, 2020. The AHS accountant is Steve Scheaffer, CPA, of Kerr, McVey, Scheaffer & Associates of Anchorage. Foraker does our bookkeeping.

AHS has insurance for its office, Board of Directors and executive director. The office is located at 1501 W. 36th St., #210, in Anchorage. Our business license, non-profit registration and charitable organization registrations with the State of Alaska are current.

Fund raising activities for year included an appeal for donations through the membership renewal mailing, and the Permanent Fund Dividend Pick Click Give program. Several individuals renewed at patron or higher levels of membership. This year \$1,999.50 was pledged by 37 individuals through Pick Click Give, and AHS has been approved for the program again in 2021. A record 93 individuals donated money to AHS this past year. Notably, Karl Gurcke and Ron Inouye made large donations to our endowment.

AHS is the non-profit sponsor for Anne Coray and Steve Kahn, who are producing a film about Brown Carlson, an early settler in the Lake Clark area. To date, 16 people have donated to the project [15 this year, 1 last year]. All donations, less a 5% administrative fee, have been disbursed to the filmmakers.

Antonson reported that close to 100 participants had registered for the AHS conference, with fees being accepted through PayPal. At \$50 per person, registration fees should about cover the cost of the conference, including webinar hosting, PayPal's 3% service fees, honorariums and awards.

4. **Board of Directors Election.** Johnson reported that, annually, AHS elects five of its fifteen members on the Board of Directors to three-year terms. The bylaws state an individual can serve only two terms before taking a year off. The past president, if ending his or her second term serves another year. This year, Tom Bundtzen, Aaron Leggett and Averil Lerman completed second terms and must take a year off. Rogan Faith and Erik Johnson completed their first terms and agreed to run for a second. Carol Gales, Penelope Goforth, Michael Hawfield, Larry Hibpshman and Rebecca Poulson also agreed to be on the ballot. A total of 145 valid ballots were returned. Members elected Gales, Goforth, Hawfield, Johnson and Poulson. The 2020-2021 Board of Directors will meet in the next two weeks to elect officers for the year.

5. **Membership.** Antonson reported that the membership stands at 382, with members hailing from 46 Alaska communities, 29 other states, and the countries of Canada, Germany, and Sweden. A renewal letter was sent in January, and a reminder in March to those who did not respond. Thirty-two members renewed at the patron level, and 7 members gave gift memberships. AHS gained 37 new members, and has 35 life members.

6. **Newsletter, journal, records and collections.** Mason reported that the newsletter *Alaska History News* is compiled and distributed quarterly to members, as well as to museums, historical societies and cultural institutions in Alaska. Frank Broderick of Archgraphics does the layout, Great Originals in Anchorage does the printing, and TNT Services does the mailing. Mason has been writing the news and notes sent in by local societies; Chris Allan has been providing the oddments; and Antonson has been coordinating.

Antonson said that everyone should have received the first issue of volume 35 of the *Alaska History* journal in the spring. A number of submissions of very good manuscripts led to the publishing of a special edition in the summer. The fall issue is at the printers and due to ship mid-November. The printer is Sheridan Books in Michigan, which provides affordable services, and TNT Services does the mailing. Ross Coen is editor.

Antonson said that the University of Alaska Anchorage Archives and Manuscripts Department houses AHS's records and donated collections. Archivist Arlene Schmuland has been excellent to work with. This past year, 24 individuals donated papers, films, photographs, and other materials to AHS. Last winter, the UAA archives crowd-sourced for individuals to help transcribe a Gold Rush diary that had been donated to AHS. The response was amazing and included people from other states and countries. The archives staff put on its website the digitized diary with the transcription next to each page. Last month the AHS Board voted to make a \$1,000 grant to the UAA archives to pay for digitization of some films in the society's collection that were deteriorating. The project has already been completed.

7. **Website, 49 History blog, social media.** Brewster reported that she maintains the website, which includes the 49 History Blog. She adds to the blog when people send her articles, and asked if someone wished to be editor of the blog to solicit more articles. Billy Finley of Couloir Graphics provides technical assistance for the website and also for the Zoom conference.

Johnson said that most social media efforts are relaying announcements. AHS has 1,900 followers on Facebook, 800 on Twitter and 437 on Instagram. Social media postings about the closing of the NARA facility in Seattle were heavily re-shared.

8. **Alaska Historical Commission nominations.** Bundtzen reported that AHS recommends individuals to the Governor for two seats on the 9-member Alaska Historical Commission. Mike Hawfield and Rebecca Poulson served this past year in the seats. Hawfield's second term ended last summer, and he opted not to seek reappointment. The committee noticed that interior and northern Alaska did not have representation on the commission, and recommended three individuals to the Governor for the seat. Governor Dunleavy appointed Ray Bonnell of Fairbanks to the seat. Bundtzen thanked Hawfield for his diligent and thoughtful work on the commission, and encouraged AHS members to contact Poulson and Bonnell to suggest projects the commission might undertake, and to discuss issues regarding Alaska history and its preservation.

9. **2020 annual meeting, conference.** Mason reported that the ongoing virtual AHS conference is going well, thanks to efforts of the program committee including Schneider, Antonson and Brewster. Originally the conference was to have been in Sitka, but is currently taking place virtually because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In December 2019, Museums Alaska informed AHS that they had decided to not meet jointly in 2020. Sitka Historical Society, under Director Hal Spackman, stepped up to host the conference and planning started. The Board of Directors selected the conference theme "Place and Power" and sent out a call for papers. With the onset of

the COVID-19 pandemic, a number of members indicated they would not participate in an in-person conference. The Board of Directors decided in July to hold this year's annual meeting and conference virtually.

The conference includes two keynote sessions: Tom Thornton and Harvey Kitka speaking on Southeast Alaska place and history with an emphasis on geographic names, and Beverly Beeton speaking on women's suffrage to commemorate the centennial of the 19th amendment. Sadly, in August, Beeton passed away, so the session occurred without her. Other sessions have included a Richard K. Nelson remembrance session and an ANCSA panel. The program has been going very well.

The program committee decided to use the Zoom platform for the virtual conference. It fit the needs, and many of our members have become familiar with it. Decisions included not holding concurrent sessions, having two sessions per day with long breaks to avoid "Zoom fatigue," to accommodate all who responded to the call for papers, and to hold the conference Thursday through Saturday over two weeks. Brewster stepped up to be the Zoom host and has done a terrific job. There have been some technical glitches but all have been resolvable. Nearly 100 people are registered for the conference.

10. **Advocacy.** Hartman reported that it was a busy year for this committee.

In January 2020, the National Archives and Records Administration announced plans to close its regional facility in Seattle, where many materials from the Anchorage NARA facility had been sent after the Anchorage location closed. AHS is working with colleagues in Washington, Oregon and Idaho to continue pressing for a NARA facility to remain in the Pacific Northwest, possibly Olympia.

AHS continues to advocate for archives and museums in the state to ensure that public access to archives remains despite budget cuts. This has involved letter-writing and working with archives to get a sense of what is needed.

Thanks to the efforts of David Ramseur, the committee sent questions to candidates running for federal and state legislatures asking about funding for archives and other topics of interest to AHS members. Some responses have been received. Responses will be shared with the membership online or via mailing. Brewster suggested that responses be published in local newspapers. Inouye encouraged board members to speak with legislators and to educate them on topics related to AHS advocacy. Sherif suggested making appointments to meet with new legislators before they go to Juneau.

The committee drafted a statement on monuments and statues, and that is now available on the AHS website. A panel discussion on the topic will take place Friday.

11. **State Historic Preservation Office.** Bittner thanked AHS and the advocacy committee, and reported that the state is extremely challenged due to low revenues. The State Historic Preservation Office will be challenged with obtaining funds to match federal monies. They are down to half staff due to attrition, and Judy hopes to eventually fill vacant positions.

12. **Special projects. Rebuilding Brown Project.** Antonson reported that AHS is serving as the non-profit sponsor for Anne Coray and Steve Kahn, who own the property and cabin built by Brown Carlson, one of the first permanent residents around Lake Clark. They have researched and interviewed a number of people who knew Carlson. Anne and Steve are seeking grants and contributions to produce a film.

Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act 50th anniversary in 2021. Schneider reported that the anniversary committee would like to produce an online (and eventually hard copy) guide to primary resources related to ANCSA. The guide will build on the annotated bibliography that was produced for ANCSA at 40, and will be useful to the public during the anniversary year as well as into the future. The Rasmuson Foundation agreed to match contributions by Alaska Native Corporations. AHS now has commitments of approximately \$20,000 total, which would cover funding to produce the online guide. Now the committee needs to identify researchers to explore primary resource collections in Anchorage, Fairbanks and Juneau and online. Please let Schneider know if you are interested. Sherif added that the committee sent out surveys to locate smaller collections held by libraries and individuals throughout the state.

United States 250th Anniversary in 2025. Johnson said that the acting superintendent of Denali National Park is one of the chairs of the National Park Service's nationwide effort, and he will update AHS as soon as he has had a chance to meet with the acting superintendent. Antonson said there will be a request to set up a committee within the state. Schneider suggested the Society could have sessions at an annual conference to reexamine the Constitution.

Women's Suffrage. Bittner said there is \$15,000 funding available from the lieutenant governor's office for efforts related to the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Women's Suffrage. Funds are available through June 30, 2021.

13. **Memorials.** Ron Inouye presented brief biographies of notable Alaskans and longtime AHS members and friends who passed away this past year. Ron said an avenue of research could be to study the lives of people who have gone before us:

Jacob Anangi Adams, Sr., Utqiagvik  
Mary J. Barry, Anchorage (last years in Fairbanks)  
Beverly Beeton, Seattle  
James "Richard" Beneville, Nome  
Alan Boraas, Soldotna  
Raymond Collins, McGrath  
Carol Ann Derfner, Anchorage  
Phyllis Ann Fast, Anchorage and Fairbanks  
Bruce Grossmann, Delta Junction  
Edwin S. Hall, Brockport, NY  
Holger "Jorgy" Jorgensen, Fairbanks  
Byron Mallott, Juneau  
Richard K. "Nels" Nelson, Sitka  
Dave Neufeld, Whitehorse, YT  
Donald J. Orth, Falls Church, VA

Robert “Bob” Price, Juneau  
Kathy Kohlkorst Ruddy, Juneau  
Ronald Senungetuk, Anchorage

14. **Awards.** Schneider presented the following awards, which the Board of Directors endorsed at the September meeting:

James H. Ducker Alaska Historian of the Year Award (with \$500 prize): Thomas Alton, author of *Alaska in the Progressive Age: A Political History, 1896 to 1916*.

Elva R. Scott Local Historical Society Award:A Salcha Historical Society with special recognition of Amy Viltrakis, founder.

Esther Billman Award for Excellence: Paula Johnson, Rich Mattson and Laury Scandling, researchers/writers for the *Gastineau Heritage News* of the Gastineau Channel Historical Society.

Contributions to Alaska History Awards: David Reamer for “Histories of Anchorage” in the *Anchorage Daily News*; and David James for the “Becoming Alaskan” and “Creating Alaska” series and Alaskan book reviews in the *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*.

Student and Beginning Professional Travel Award: TiaAnna Puya Tidwell, Ph.D. Candidate at University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Special Recognition: Alaska History Editorial Advisors Stephen Haycox, Bill Hunt, Mary Mangusso, John Whitehead, Terrence Cole, Ann Fienup Riordan, Timothy Rawson and Andrei Znamenski, for over 220 combined years of service to AHS and the wider world of those who value the study of our past.

The recipients of the Morgan and Jeanie Sherwood Award for Best Article in Volume 34 (2019) are Mary F. Ehrlander and Hild M. Peters for “Grafton and Clara Burke: Medical Missionaries in Fort Yukon.” They also received a \$500 prize.

President’s Award (Beaver Log): Ian Hartman, for his work leading the efforts of the AHS Advocacy Committee. This year’s beaver log is from the headwaters of the Kobuk River near Walker Lake.

Schneider also praised Antonson, Brewster and Mason for their efforts in putting on the first virtual conference, and for efforts throughout the year to keep the organization moving forward and meeting its obligations.

15. **Other.** Plans for the auction will be discussed in future meetings. Images from the Salcha Historical Society were shown.

16. **Adjournment.** Brewster moved to adjourn. Mason seconded. All in favor. The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:03 pm.

Angela Schmidt  
Secretary