Dear AkLA members,

This could be my last letter to the membership as President. Official election results are not in due to a problem with the paper ballots. However, since we had trouble recruiting potential officers and I offered to continue as President and ran unopposed, I am guessing that I will continue on in this role for another year. It has been a great learning experience and a terrific opportunity to interact with peers throughout the state and now that I have an idea of how things work and what to do, I may actually be better at it this year. My thanks to all of those on the E-Council who have helped me along.

Please consider running for office next year. We had four offices to fill this year and no willing candidates. Three people offered to continue in their current positions and their names were on the ballot. I know that many of you have taken leadership workshops or attended leadership training. Take that next step and consider throwing your hat in the ring next year. We will be sending a draft of new position descriptions to the membership soon to change our by-laws to a President-Elect/President structure rather than the current President/Past-President one. This must go to a vote of the membership. If it passes, it will mean that we elect both a President and President-Elect next year. We really do need you.

Keep your eye on Alaska Internet Circle of Safety (sue.sherif@alaska.gov). It is a grant designed to create a logo, web page, and training materials to teach parents and librarians what they need to know to keep children safe on the internet.

During the last few months I forwarded our legislative goals to our lobbyist, Clark Gruening, and formally invited him to our conference in Kodiak. Registration is open for conference and I hope you can attend. It is quite wonderful to have the opportunity to visit different parts of our state via conference. Many thanks to Joe D’Elia and David Ongley and the entire crew in Kodiak for putting together what looks like a very exciting program.

Sincerely,
Mary Jo Joiner,
2008 AkLA President
CONGRATULATIONS TO 2009 AKLA SCHOLARSHIP AWARDEES

(Names, where currently employed, and the universities they are attending:)

2009 AkLA Scholarship awardees

Kate Duncan (Juneau, JPL) - Clarion
D’Arcy Hutchings (Anchorage, UAA) - U of Alabama
Jodi Jacques (Anchorage, Leg. Affairs - UW Milwaukee
Catherine Melville (Juneau, JPL) - UI Champaign-Urbana
Christine Snyder (North Pole, NPHS) - Drexel

2009 B.Jo Morse Scholarship awardee

Tamra Wear (Soldotna, Soldotna HS) - Montana State  ♠

Aja Markel Razumny
Alaska State Library

WORLD’S LARGEST BOOK ?

The world’s largest book, Bhutan, measures 5x7 feet, weighs nearly 150 pounds, and presents an entire gallery exhibit of spectacular photographs in a single monumental volume....

http://web.media.mit.edu/~mike.fp/bhutan/

When the British invaded southern Burma in the mid nineteenth century, Mindon Min was concerned that Buddhist dhamma (teachings) would also be detrimentally affected in the North where he reigned. As well as organizing the Fifth Buddhist Synod in 1871, he was responsible for the construction in Mandalay of the world’s largest book, consisting of 729 large marble tablets with the Tipitaka Pali canon of Theravada Buddhism inscribed on them in gold. One more was added to record how it all came about, making it 730 stone inscriptions in total.....

BOOK REVIEW: HISTORIC PHOTOS OF ALASKA


I was wary about the request to review this coffee-table sized book of 198 black and white photographs of Alaska for *Newspoke*. After 30 years living in Alaska and working in libraries that held significant collections of Alaskana photographs, I simply was not sure that I wanted to spend much time delving into what I thought would be just another pretty picture book.

I was wrong. Dermot Cole, who has lived in Alaska for 35 years and has worked in publishing for much of that time, has selected photographs that are largely new to me and, I suspect, to many Alaskans. A total of 136 images in this book are from the Library of Congress; many bear a reproduction number indicating that the pictures are held in LC’s Prints and Photographs Collection.

The charm of the LC photographs is simply their newness to eyes that have seen many Alaskana pictures. Surprising images include: a gentleman tipping his hat to a human-shaped chunk of ice from the Taku Glacier; a Model T Ford that has been retrofitted as a mechanical saw to cut lumber; an ingenious vehicle of two bicycles welded together with a motor mounted on the rear for propulsion; and six be-hatted gentlemen standing amidst a field of grain whose stalks are nearly as tall as they are.

Two photographs on facing pages made me laugh out loud: a low tide and a high tide picture of a baseball field in Ketchikan taken from the same vantage point.

The book is arranged chronologically with four sections covering the pre-territorial years of 1867-1905, early territorial years of 1906-1919, the Depression years of 1920-1940, and the road to statehood and beyond 1941-1979.

Nearly 70 images cover Alaskans at work and play. A total of 38 pictures show how Alaskans met the challenges of travel in the Great Land, with photos of sleds drawn by dogs, horses, and reindeer to automobiles, small craft, ships, and airplanes.

The remaining 90 photographs depict Native Alaskans, landscapes, towns, and many individual buildings. This book is an interesting and unexpected compilation of images rarely available in Alaska.

---

**FIFTY MILES FROM TOMORROW**

By William L. Iggiaigruk Hensley, 2008

“An enlightening, affirmative look at Inuit culture and history by a devoted champion.” — *Kirkus Reviews*

“Although this fascinating memoir is set hundreds of miles from where most Americans have ever dared to travel, Hensley brings to life this ‘little-known part of America’ through myriad tales of toil, triumph, and the Inupiat Ilitquiat—the Inupiat spirit. . . . Through his entire adult life, Hensley’s mission has been simple: to ensure the Inupiat are allowed to keep their rights and their land. There are rich details of hunting adventures and typical childhood struggles, but the deep-rooted values and strength of the Inupiat people are what make this work truly sing.” — *Publishers Weekly*, Pick of the week
KETCHIKAN

POLAR EXPRESS
CHRISTMAS IN
KETCHIKAN

This past Christmas at the Ketchikan Public Library, the children’s library was transformed into the “Polar Express Christmas Village” thanks to the creative efforts of Vera Freeman, Debbie Gravel, and many generous contributors.

Using the classic Chris Van Allsburg book “The Polar Express” as inspiration, Vera had her talented artist daughter, Grace, paint a three foot by five foot mural of the train on cardboard which welcomed visitors into the library. Blue snowflake lights and handmade snowflakes illuminated the mural, and a “Polar Express” sign dripping with silver glitter and bells hung on the interior door near the mural.

Inside the library, children were enchanted with tiny village scenes illuminated with lights that were placed on top of low and high bookcases. These “Christmas village” houses, stores, and accessories are found in stores around the country and on-line with many different names. Vera specifically wanted a train station for our display, and we found one easily on E-bay for less than ten dollars, but the many other pieces were loaned by library staff members. The Ketchikan City Manager, Karl Amylon, even got in on the fun and loaned us his fire station that lit up with silent alarm lights and action whenever a patron walked by.

(Cont. on pg. 5)
The jewel of our display was a real, working Lionel “Polar Express” train donated by Vern Glover, a Southwestern railroad historian, train lover and the father of the librarian! She says he has been waiting 43 years for her to call and say “Dad, I need a train,” and no sooner had she hung up than the train was on its way.

Vera built the train a plywood platform, covered it in green and gold spray paint and set it up on our highest bookcase. After some trial and error, the staff learned to run the train back and forth at a safe speed and blow the whistle. Library visitors were allowed to run the train with supervision, and the preschool boys, in particular, were enchanted.

The train was unveiled during the December Downtown Art Walk. Some 90 people turned out for hot chocolate, coloring sheets and train demonstrations. It was a great start to a memorable holiday season at the Ketchikan Public Library.

Charlotte Glover
Ketchikan Public Library

With the statewide push to get children ready to read, APL has stepped forward to be a proactive partner by creating the Ready to Read Resource Center, through a generous grant from the Alaska State Library with support from the Institute of Museum and Library Services. The Center promotes early literacy development throughout the entire state by providing resources to those who serve children birth to age three.

Three types of circulating materials are available:
1) Ready to Read Tubs, containing an assortment of 30-50 board books and easy paperbacks for infants and toddlers, covering all of the Public Library Association’s six pre-reading skills that every child needs to have in order to read;
2) Read to Me at Home Tubs, containing ten small canvas bags filled with three board books that families can take home and read with their young children;
3) Lapsit Bags, five or six books, CD, and puppet or prop, all based on a theme.

The materials are designed for those who help infants and toddlers develop their pre-literacy skills but may not have the resources to adequately do so. Thus, rural libraries may find this APL service a fantastic resource. If you want to strengthen your board book collection, borrow the tubs. Loan period is for six weeks; then return the tubs and borrow another to refresh your collection. If you want a resource for storytelling for youth age birth to three, borrow the Lapsit Bags. They are loaned for three weeks,
complete with suggestions for fingerplays, songs, and action rhymes—an instant Lapsit program at your fingertips!

In addition to rural libraries, other agencies may find the Center’s materials useful: child care centers, licensed family child care providers, pre-schools, early childhood development programs, health clinics—anyone who works with children birth to age three. Please help bring this resource to the attention of potential patrons in your community. Contact Terrie Chang, Project Manager, for promotional materials.

To promote the Ready to Read Resource Center project, the Center has an Advisory Board of librarians and early childhood professionals from across the state, who are actively spreading the word about our resources. Also, APL Youth Services staff will present pre-reading skills workshops at various upcoming conferences attended by both rural and urban Alaskans, including the AKLA conference. And, yes, the Ready to Read Resource Center website will be coming soon!

Please contact Terrie Chang at ChangTN@muni.org or phone 907-343-2970 for more information.

Terrie Chang
Anchorage Public Library
The Uncommon Reader, by Alan Bennett, 2007. This novella could easily be overlooked among the flashy paperbacks and weighty tomes, but that would be a mistake. Starting when Queen Elizabeth drops by a bookmobile while chasing her recalcitrant Corgis, the story traces her increasing passion for pleasure reading and the effect this activity has on those around her. Dryly witty and engrossing, this tidbit is a must read for anglophiles and bibliophiles alike. Plus, the covers are extra long with a bend, and serve wonderfully as bookmarks, should you find yourself able to put the book down. (Freya Anderson, Alaska State Library)

If you are a dog aficionado and/or love to read descriptive paragraphs, The Story of Edgar Sawtelle is for you. However, you must also be able to endure long, drawn out story sequences. David Wroblewski’s 2008 novel is very readable, but too small New England prep school, everyone has a story to tell, from the Headmaster to the cashier in the cafeteria, told in individual, first-person chapters. This tour de force of character and dialogue sucks you in with the plot drawn from the headlines and then slowly breaks your heart as you realize the kids are only reacting to the world their parents have created for them. Another great read from the prolific and versatile Shreve, who I think is really underrated as a writer. Happy New Year! (Charlotte Glover, Ketchikan Public Library)

You Can Never Find a Rickshaw When It Moons: The World on One Cartoon A Day, by Mo Willems, 2006, makes me wish I could sum up all my elaborate and wordy journal entries from my time spent in Nepal with a haiku a day, which is essentially what this children’s book writer has done in these quirky comics. The author has

(Cont. on pg. 8)
This year took Sammy and me to Fairbanks, Alaska, where I gave presentations at the Alaska Library Association Annual Conference. I also gathered data for a research project. I have yet to write up those findings … that will be one of my next big projects. It was wonderful to visit with our many Alaskan friends in Fairbanks. ❖

NOTE FROM JULIE ILIFF

This year took Sammy and me to Fairbanks, Alaska, where I gave presentations at the Alaska Library Association Annual Conference. I also gathered data for a research project. I have yet to write up those findings … that will be one of my next big projects. It was wonderful to visit with our many Alaskan friends in Fairbanks. ❖

Sammy (6 yrs. old) and Julie standing on the Chena River, Fairbanks, Alaska, Feb. 2008

Sammy’s favorite photo of us, December 2008

Julie Iliff
California State University
A NEW KIND OF LITERATURE

Here’s a literary parable for the 21st century: Lisa Genova, 38, was a health-care industry consultant in Belmont, Mass., who wanted to be a novelist, but she couldn’t get her book published for love or money. She had a Ph.D. in neuroscience from Harvard, but she couldn’t get an agent. “I did what you’re not supposed to do,” she says. “I queried literary agents. I went to writers’ conferences and tried to network. I emailed editors. Nobody wanted it.” So Genova paid $450 to a company called iUniverse and published her book, *Still Alice*, herself.

That was in 2007. By 2009 people were still reading *Still Alice*. Not a lot of people, but a few, and those few were liking it. Genova wound up getting an agent after all—and an offer from Simon and Schuster of just over half a million dollars. It reached the N. Y. Times best-seller list.

Publishing is evolving. Devices like the Sony Reader and Amazon’s Kindle have gained devoted followings. Google has scanned more than seven million books into its online database. Writers post their books, chapter by chapter, on blogs. Four of the five best-selling novels in Japan in 2007 were written, and read, on cell phones—written by amateurs and posted on free community websites, by the hundreds and thousands, with no expectation of payment.


Four self-published novels that hit it big

\[\text{Print by Numbers.}\
\text{A short course in literary statistics}\
\]

\[-3.6\%\]
Percentage drop in hardcover sales in the U.S. in 2008

\[+3.5\%\]
Percentage increase in the U.S. of adult readers of literature since 2002

\[+10\%\]
Percentage increase in revenues at Author Solutions, a self-publishing firm, in 2008

\[80\%\]
Percentage of Japan’s top five best sellers in 2007 that were written on cell phones
Origins
The Library was founded in 1800, making it the oldest federal cultural institution in the nation. On August 24, 1814, British troops burned the Capitol building (where the Library was housed) and destroyed the Library’s core collection of 3,000 volumes. On January 30, 1815, Congress approved the purchase of Thomas Jefferson’s personal library of 6,487 books for $23,950.

Statistics
The Library of Congress is the largest library in the world, with more than 138 million items on approximately 650 miles of bookshelves. The collections include more than 32 million books and other print materials, 2.9 million recordings, 12.5 million photographs, 5.3 million maps, 5.5 million pieces of sheet music, and 61 million manuscripts.

The Collections
The Library receives some 22,000 items each working day and adds approximately 10,000 items to the collections daily. The majority of the collections are received through the copyright registration process, as the Library is home to the U.S. Copyright Office.

Languages
Approximately half of the Library’s book and serial collections are in languages other than English. The collections contain materials in some 470 languages.

Rare Books and Manuscripts
The collection includes the first extant book printed in North America, “The Bay Psalm Book” (1640).
MINIATURE BOOKS

Physicists at the nano imaging laboratory of Simon Fraser University in Canada have created a 0.07mm x 0.10mm book using a focused-gallium-ion beam.

“It is primarily a work of art—we are using it as just a fun project,” said Professor Karen Kavanagh. “In order to read it, you have to have an electron microscope.”

The two current smallest books listed in Guinness World Records are the *New Testament of the King James Bible* (5 by 5mm, created in 2001) and Chekhov’s *Chameleon* (0.9 by 0.9mm created in 2002). . . .

[http://www.labnews.co.uk/laboratory_article.php/1881/2/nanoscience-creates-worlds-smallest-book](http://www.labnews.co.uk/laboratory_article.php/1881/2/nanoscience-creates-worlds-smallest-book)

[blog.mann-ivanov-ferber.ru/.../12/mini-knizhki/](blog.mann-ivanov-ferber.ru/.../12/mini-knizhki/)

---

General guidelines to publication in *Newspoke*, Alaska Library Association newsletter:

**Not accepted:** paid advertising; material intended to “sell; make a profit” rather than to “inform.” Submissions viewed as advertisements, unless item is of particular interest to Alaska, Alaskan patrons and/or libraries, or is submitted by an AkLA member.

**Accepted:** Alaskana—books, book reviews, or articles relating to, or of interest to, Alaskan librarians and/or their patrons. Informative material related to libraries and librarianship, especially in regard to Alaska.

Most anything submitted by AkLA members—reasonably “tasteful and well-written,” of an appropriate length (much leeway here); author is willing to submit to possible editorial changes, which may include length, spellings, downsizing of convoluted sentences. . . . (Editor will make every effort to let the author know of, and pre-approve, any significant changes before the material is published in *Newspoke.*)

**Other**—determined on an individual basis by “the committee” (defined as a group of at least three people, composed of AkLA members). If the *Newspoke* editor or the individual submitting has questions or concerns about any submission, the matter will be sent on to the *Newspoke* Committee.
ALASKA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
PO Box 81084
Fairbanks, AK 99708

President Mary Jo Joiner mjoiner@ci.kenai.ak.us
Vice President for Committees, Susan Mitchell afsm1@uaa.alaska.edu
   Roundtables and Chapters David Ongley david.ongley@tuzzy.org
Vice President for Conference Jane Fuerstenau ifjef@uaa.alaska.edu
Past-President Joyce McCombs deltlibrary@wildak.net
Secretary Catherine Powers Catherine_powers@bethel.uaf.edu
Treasurer Charlotte Glover charg@firstcitylibraries.org
ALA Representative Helen Hill hhill@ci.homer.ak.us
PNLA Representative * Alaska Library Directory
   Publications aflma@gci.net
Executive Officer * Newspoke, Loretta Andress
E-list mary@gci.net
Website aklalist@akla.org
http://www.akla.org

CALENDAR
AkLA-Anchorage–Mayoral Forum, University of Alaska Anchorage, 6:00 p.m Mar. 1, 2009
   Seattle, WA
   Seattle, WA
AkLA-Anchorage, UAA Consortium Library, Room 302A, 4:15 pm Apr. 9, 2009
AkLA-Anchorage, Alaska Native Medical Center, May 14, 2009
   4325 Diplomacy Drive, Anchorage, 4:15 pm
American Library Association (Annual Conf.), Chicago, IL July 9-15, 2009