

Museum reopens doors, rotates collection

By DAN RUDY
Sentinel writer

The Wrangell Museum at the Nolan Center is open once again, after shutting down for two months for cataloging.

Museum Director Terri Henson explained that all the items in the collection have been photographed and logged in Microsoft Excel.

"There were a hundred (items) in there alone," she said of the museum's main gallery.

Eventually the full collection will be inventoried and available for review online using the PastPerfect system. The cataloging software is currently used in 9,500 museums worldwide and preserves a digital record of artifacts and archival materials.

"We were right on schedule," Henson said. "We're looking at a three-year project. From the time we started, we're about nine months into it."

Henson, several part-time staff and other volunteers worked through February and March to document and log each item in the museum's possession.

"I have the best crew," she explained. "There's not many of us, but we all work hard."

The archiving project has opened up new opportunities for rotating exhibits, as museum staff get ideas for different displays.

The Japan and Wrangell display in front of the gift shop will be put away and replaced in the coming weeks, though what will take its place remains a surprise. Henson explained another case in the Nolan Center entryway will similarly house a rotating display that will be open to the public.

"We really want to have something new here all the time," she said.

The museum will also start to feature local art

and loaned collections. At the moment, custom woodwork by Jordan Glass is viewable near the gift shop entrance. A Wrangell resident of 30 years, Glass' displayed pieces are furniture and decorations crafted from wood burls. These will be on display through May and June, after which another artist's work will be displayed.

"What we're wanting to do is feature either a local Wrangell artist or a collection, something they'd like to share," said Henson. From that point, collections will alternate every couple of months. Those wishing to share their art or interesting collections are encouraged to contact the museum for more information.

Another recently introduced exhibit that invites patrons to identify various pictures and odd objects found in the collection's storage has seen some successes.

"We've been able to identify some people in the photographs," Henson said. Some people have provided insights to museum staff on obscure and otherwise indiscernible bits and bobs. "It's coming together really well."

A Minke whale skull on loan from Ira Merrill has also been put on display in the main entryway. The skull was assembled and arranged for the museum by Cindy Kilpatrick and Steve Cross.

New rates approved by the Borough Assembly took effect at the beginning of April, with regular admission raised to \$7 and the special resident price of \$2 eliminated. Friends of the Museum can get in for a special fee of \$4 per visit.

The museum rate readjustment was the first in over a decade, and the borough estimated the change would raise about \$8,000 each year from visitors.

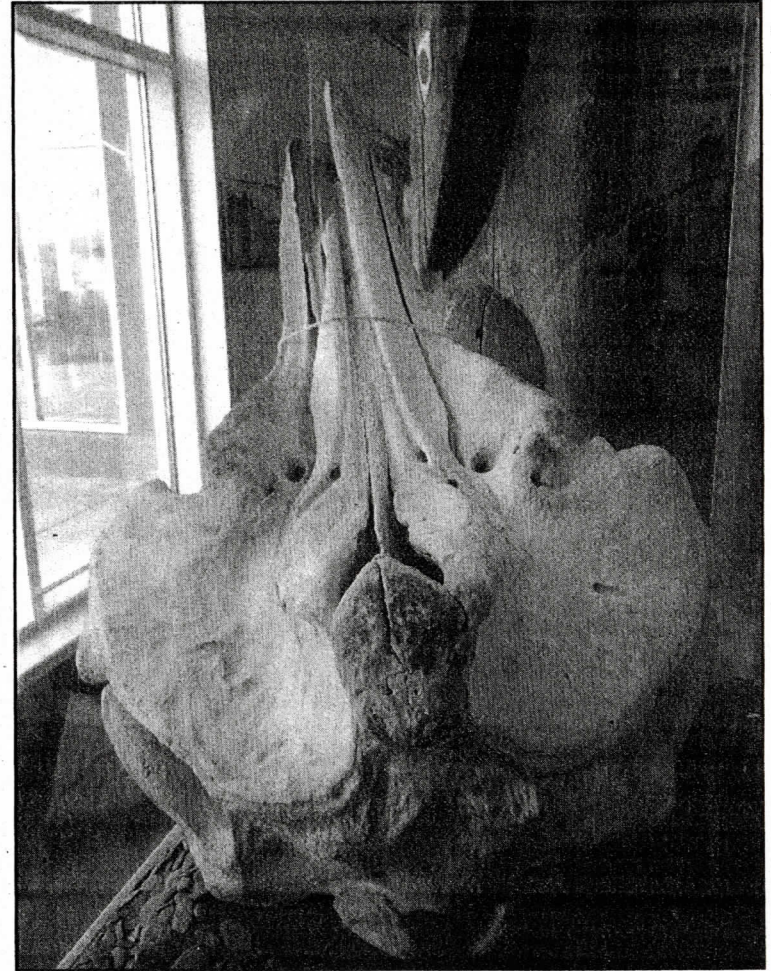


PHOTO BY DAN RUDY

A Minke whale skull on loan from Ira Merrill is on display in the Nolan Center's main entryway. One of the newer items at Wrangell Museum, the skull was assembled and arranged by Cindy Kilpatrick and Steve Cross.