

27 May 2013

The Honorable Stephanie Scott, Mayor
Members of the Assembly
The Haines Borough
P.O.Box 1209
Haines, AK 99827

Dear Mayor Scott and Members of the Assembly:

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed closure of the Sheldon Museum for 3 months due to budgetary restrictions.

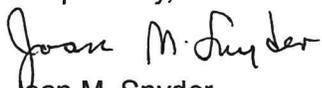
I do not pretend to be knowledgeable about the budget process, or even the finances of the Borough. I do however, appreciate what a great asset, culturally and educationally, the Sheldon Museum is to the Borough of Haines, the Chilkat Valley and the State of Alaska. The Sheldon Museum is one of only seven Museums in the State of Alaska which is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums(AAM), a national oversight organization which establishes criteria for rating Museums, and provides educational resources for museum personnel. It is the equivalent of the American Bar Association to the legal community or the American Medical Association to the medical community. The other accredited Museums in Alaska are the large State Museums in Anchorage, Fairbanks and Sitka; the Pratt Museum in Homer; the Sheldon Jackson Museum in Sitka and the Alutiiq Museum in Kodiak. The AAM might view a 3 month closure of the Museum by the Borough unfavorably and question the Borough's regard for its own facility, and possibly withdraw accreditation.

Closure of the Museum for an extended period of time would threaten the integrity and stability of precious artifacts, which include rare Chilkat Blankets, robes and other Tlingit regalia, now stored under controlled temperature and humidity. The integrity of the building itself would be imperiled as well, since proposed closures would probably happen during the winter time when weather is at its worst. Would the temperature and humidity of the building be maintained, and what about the snow build-up, the possibilities of pipe ruptures and water leaks?

Gallery attendance at the Museum is highest during the summer tourist season, May through September, which is an opportunity to bring in a little income to help defray the costs of the Museum's upkeep. Student groups are brought into the Museum during the fall and winter months: a unique educational experience for all the students.

The Museum is now open Monday through Saturday, late October through May and Monday through Sunday, June through September. Attendance is lightest on the weekends. If you think you must close the Museum to save a few dollars, perhaps closing it on weekends would be a preferable alternative.

Respectfully,



Joan M. Snyder
30+ year Museum Volunteer

RECEIVED Haines Borough

MAY 28 2013

Clerk's Office