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# THE HAMMER MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

## 2012

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*Our mission is to research, identify, exhibit, and preserve the history and use of hammers for the education of the general public.*

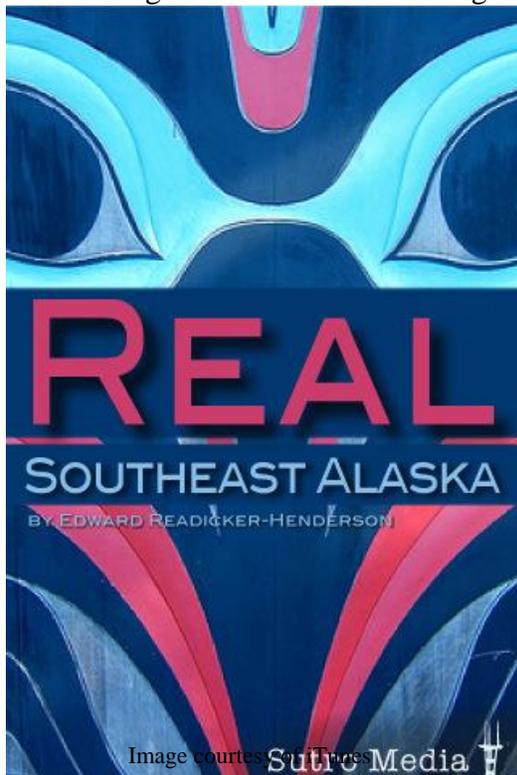
### In the Top-ten

When one ‘down south’ thinks of Alaska, polar bears and ice might come to mind. For anyone who has made the trip up to the “last frontier”, they know that beautiful landscapes and a colorful history awaits. *Alaska Magazine* notes the state’s unique past by noting “10 Must-see Museums” in their June 2011 issue. The article reviews some of the more unusual attractions available, and as you might have guessed the Hammer Museum made the top-ten.

Thanks to a generous donation the Hammer Museum will also be in an upcoming advertisement in *Alaska Magazine* as well as the *Milepost*.

### Load it, Check it, View it, Code it, The Hammer Museum Gets Technologic

Fingers have been hammering away on the keypad this season. Alaska Travel-



writer Edward Readicker-Henderson has created an iPhone application “Alaska’s Inside Passage”. The app highlights places that locals would eat, stay, and visit in Southeast cities from Ketchikan to Skagway, including the Hammer Museum. As Readicker-Henderson, describes during an interview with our local radio station, KHNS, the Hammer Museum is “marvelously cool...one of the best places to spend your time in Alaska”.

Whether clicking away on a hand-held device or personal computer, one can also check out the Museum’s new website as well as recently created Facebook and Twitter accounts. The updated website showcases a new logo, history, exhibits, and other added features.

With the social networking sites we are able to inform a wider audience about museum information and news during the operating season, May through September. Last year’s intern, Christina Simms, explained “Visitors

can check-in or tweet their location while walking around the museum. The updates furthermore provide other avenues of support.”

Simms referred to the “donations” links on both the website and Facebook page that give supporters an opportunity to donate. The Hammer Museum is a non-profit organization and remains entirely staffed by volunteers. Any donation therefore helps with operating the museum, research projects, and creating new exhibits for future visitors.

## A Major ‘Board’cast

As part of an annual fundraiser for the local non-profit radio station, KHNS, four of our board members: Cynthia Jones, Eric Kocher, Joe Ordonez, and Gene Kennedy went on the air to show support. During a segment about the Museum, Dave Pahl surprised our visiting members with a hammer he felt exemplified each person.

Our board president, Cynthia, better known in town as C.J., is an experienced climber. With a Piton hammer in hand, C.J. described to listeners how the tool was utilized to place pitons, or metal pins, driven into a crack or seam in a rock to protect a climber from a fall or assist progress in aid climbing.



Piton Hammer: Image courtesy of Rzmilitaria

It would be unusual to find our next board member’s implement on the side of a mountain, a Barrister’s hammer. Eric, an accomplished lawyer, described how this device was used by a lawyer for breaking wax seals on important documents. Photographer Joe described an advertising hammer for the Hammer Dry Plate Company does everything from plumbing to puppetry. A multipurpose hand-tool patented in 1950 seemed most appropriate, featuring a hammer, crescent wrench, and scale.

It was not just our Board that had all the fun. We would like to thank our previous interns Christina Simms and Susannah Dowds for also showing their support on-air for KHNS and the Hammer Museum.

## Taking Care of Business

The Hammer Museum was awarded a Grant-in-aid from Alaska State Museums in order to draft a business plan. With terms like executive summary and financial analysis the project might sound more inline with a for-profit corporation; the plan will allow us to develop a strategy to prepare for problems as well as opportunities. It will be implemented next year, and will focus on getting results by allocating resources and centering on key aspects important to our organization.

## Defying Gravity

Could the hammer not only be humanity’s first tool on Earth, but Space? This was a question on our minds for the 2011 season, since we received a special visitor from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). The anti-gravity hammer is on temporary loan from NASA and is currently one of our most modern items in the collection.

While the purported “space-hammer” has left the ground, it has not made it out of this World. It was used by astronauts during anti-gravity training for spacewalks at the International Space Station. We imagine all that training was necessary, as life on the Space Station can get complicated. For example, the Space Station's onboard life support system recycles water vapor from breath and urine of astronauts while they are busy performing microgravity experiments and other scientific tasks.

The purpose of anti-gravity hammer is simpler: fixing stuff. It might look a little different than your average claw-hammer. Composed of a brass alloy, the implement does not corrode as easily or spark as a ferrous metal. For a better grip, the handle sports a light blue Velcro-like fabric. Just in case, an astronaut loses his or her grasp, the hammer can be attached to a spacesuit via a small metal loop on the end of the handle.

The space-tool was returned to NASA at the end of September, but it wowed visitors during its brief stay. It further reinforced the importance of our mission, providing yet another glimpse of how the hammer has helped build the World, and beyond...



## **Internship Program: Year 5**

Each year the Hammer Museum selects a museum professional as part of our internship program. For our 2011 season, Christina Simms was selected from numerous applicants to spend her summer with us. She graduated from the University of Delaware with a degree in Material Culture Preservation and since then has worked at conservation labs throughout the United States. In Cody, Wyoming she was introduced to Outdoor Sculpture Conservation and began taking welding courses to learn more about metal fabrication.

That path eventually led her to the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington D.C. After applying protective wax coatings on bronzes in the D.C. heat, she was happy to be in Alaska, wearing a sweater in June. As Christina describes she “loves metal and always wanted to live in Alaska, and there could not be a more perfect opportunity than the Hammer Museum”. She will be attending Buffalo State College in the Fall to pursue a degree in Art Conservation. Christina would like to thank the Marks Family foundation, Hammer Museum Board, the town of Haines, and most of all Dave and Carol Pahl for making her time in Haines, Alaska an unforgettable experience.

## Bang! Bang! On the Lawn? Baby!

All the new sounds are coming from our front yard. Founder Dave Pahl has created yet another outdoor sculpture for the Hammer Museum, and this time it has



Photo by Dena Selby

moving parts. The kinetic contraption gets started with a turn of the wheel simultaneously activating three different parts: two iron-workers who begin hammering away while a small hammer taps every five times before the final component, a giant sledge, makes one loud boom on a wooden anvil.

Attached to the front of the metal and wood sculpture is also a novelty license plate, reading “HAMRDWN” in teal font. The

sculpture has quickly become a favorite of our visitors, but it is not only because of its creativity.

The moving parts, as with many items in the collection, come with a story. As Pahl explains the components, clangs, and gears have a personal meaning. Anytime he turns the wheel, he is reminded of the individuals who gave him the parts which he has combined into a work of art. For a video of this contraption in action, visit the online exhibits on our website.

### **The Hammer Museum**

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[hammermuseum.org](http://hammermuseum.org)

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