LUNCH WITH LOLA
Lola Tilly’s namesake building no longer brings students together for breakfast, lunch and dinner, but the beloved professor’s portrait still watches over them as they eat. That’s because a painting of Tilly ’63H* now hangs in a new, 420-seat dining area at Wood Center. The modern Dine Forty-nine cafeteria opened in August, replacing the 51-year-old Lola Tilly Commons. “It’ll be a hub for campus life,” Wood Center Director Lydia Anderson said at an Aug. 8 ceremony, a prediction quickly fulfilled.

ARCTIC ICHTHYOSAUR
A 12-foot-long partial skeleton of an ancient marine animal found in the Brooks Range more than 60 years ago has been confirmed as an ichthyosaur by researchers at the UA Museum of the North. Earth sciences curator Pat Druckenmiller estimates this particular marine reptile was nearly 30 feet long, a rare fossil discovery for the state. “Ichthyosaurs were amazing animals,” Druckenmiller said. “The Alaska specimen is a type called a shastasaurid, which includes the largest marine reptiles to have ever lived — some rivaled the size of living blue whales.”

ICE AGE INFANTS
An archaeological team has discovered two infants buried more than 11,000 years ago in the Tanana River valley.

  The bones of the two ice age infants are the youngest human remains from that era ever found in the Americas. Analysis indicated one infant survived birth by a few weeks, while the other died in utero.

  Ben Potter, associate professor of anthropology, led the team that discovered the infants in fall 2013 at the Upward Sun River site. The team published a paper on the find in November 2014.

  Potter’s team found the infants directly beneath a 2010 excavation of the cremated remains of a 3-year-old child.

  “Taken collectively, these burials and cremation reflect complex behaviors related to death among the early inhabitants of North America,” Potter said.

PEACE BY PIECE

There are lots of ways to solve a dispute, from fisticuffs to court battles. As a lawyer, Brian Jarrett hewed to the latter, but found it inadequate. “We need alternatives, a multidoor courthouse with options. While there is a role for standard litigation, we also need creative solutions to conflicts.”

Jarrett, now an assistant professor in the Department of Communication, founded and is editor-in-chief of the Alaska Journal of Dispute Resolution, which publishes peer-reviewed articles on alternative dispute resolution, restorative justice and therapeutic jurisprudence. He also developed the annual Global Cyber-conference on Dispute Resolution, now in its fifth year. (UAF offers a minor in dispute resolution, the only program of its kind in Alaska.)

“The participation is truly remarkable,” Jarrett said of the conference. “[One year] Tlingit peacemaker and magistrate Mike Jackson spoke about traditional dispute resolution in Kake, and, in response, a Maori peacemaker stood up on camera from New Zealand and shared Maori ways of resolving conflict.

“Communities are stepping up to develop their own solutions.”

Mike Jackson spoke about traditional dispute resolution in Kake, and, in response, a Maori peacemaker stood up on camera from New Zealand and shared Maori ways of resolving conflict. These two communities were speaking across the globe to share their own peacemaking processes. It’s a wonderful shared learning experience for everyone.”

“People are ready for change,” said Polly Hyslop, the journal’s managing editor and a Ph.D. student in indigenous studies. “More and more communities are stepping up to develop their own solutions. They’re adapting what they learn at the conference to make peace in their communities.”

Adapted from the original story by Danny Dyer in the 2014 issue of Clarity magazine, published by the College of Liberal Arts. You can download the issue at www.uaf.edu/clia/.

GALLERY GIFT

The UA Museum of the North went through a major expansion nearly 10 years ago, but the makeover did not extend to the original Gallery of Alaska, built in 1980 and home to the beloved Otto Bear, at left. The museum is now able to begin work on a $5 million upgrade of the Gallery of Alaska thanks to a $1 million personal gift from Professor Emeritus Peggy Shumaker and Joe Usibelli ’59, ’96H*. The renovation project is slated to take place in five phases, which will allow the gallery to remain open to visitors. The gift from Usibelli and Shumaker creates the foundation for the project and its fundraising campaign. When complete, the Peggy Shumaker and Joe Usibelli Gallery of Alaska will have modern lighting and displays that will protect artifacts, along with hands-on elements to make the exhibits an interactive experience for visitors of all ages.

Bear photo courtesy of UA Museum of the North. Above photo courtesy of Joe Usibelli and Peggy Shumaker.
NIH GRANTS EXPAND BIOMEDICINE IN ALASKA

UAF researchers who received two major grants from the National Institutes of Health aim to change not only the way biomedical research is done in Alaska but also who does it. Using $42.6 million during the next five years, they want to connect their research to communities and train more Alaska Native scientists.

In August, NIH granted $18.8 million to continue the Alaska IDeA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence. INBRE links the three UA campuses as they expand biomedical research and train students. Among other things, the program provides seed money for innovative research projects and training.

The second NIH grant, in October, provided $23.8 million to the Biomedical Learning and Student Training program. BLaST will offer scholarships, workshops, seminars and facility funds across the state, including at nine rural educational institutions. “We see it as a pipeline with multiple entry points and multiple exit points,” said Karsten Hueffer, an associate professor of veterinary microbiology and one of three BLaST leaders.

FROZEN FROG-SICLES

Repeated freezing and thawing in late fall may prompt Alaska’s wood frogs to produce a lot more of a chemical that allows them to survive the winter, UAF researchers have discovered.

Wood frogs overwinter under duff and leaf litter, where they freeze hard for seven months. Usually when living cells freeze, they expel water, dry out and die. Frogs prevent the drying and dying by packing their cells with glucose, a kind of sugar.

Curiously, wild frogs build up far more glucose than frogs in the lab, biology graduate student Don Larson found. “In the field in early autumn, it’s freezing during the night, thawing slightly during the day, and these repeated freezing episodes stimulate the frogs to release more and more glucose,” Larson said. Lab frogs weren’t exposed to a similar cycle.

The feats of freezing frogs may one day help transplantation of human organs. “If science can figure out how to freeze human organs without damage, it would allow more time to reach people in need of organs,” said Larson.


KUDOS

2015 Alaska Journal of Commerce Top 40 Under 40

2014 Autism Society Volunteer of the Year

2015 Governor’s Award for the Humanities

2015 Governor’s Award for the Arts

2014-2016 Alaska State Writer Laureate