

GUEST COLUMN



MATTHEW GASTON | THE SHERIDAN PRESS

Four-year-olds Brylee Newman, Spiderman, and Kaitlyn Hansen, T-Rex, take a break from The Brinton Museum's "Things That Go Bump in the Night" scavenger hunt to take in the view Saturday, Oct. 31, 2020. The Brinton Museum still managed to host events despite the pandemic.

A year in review at The Brinton

As fall is turning to winter, the new nature trails have been closed for the season and the Ranch House and outbuildings put up for the winter.

But The Brinton Museum is not ready to hibernate.

The Forrest E. Mars, Jr. Building will remain open until Dec. 21 with a brand new exhibit, which opened Nov. 7. The Brinton 101 fills both of our large galleries with small and affordable works in many different media, something for everyone's taste, and a great way to start or add to your personal art collection.

Looking back at 2020, our staff has been busy reimagining and finding new ways to share our collections, online and via video, while following protocols to keep the visitors who do come to the museum safe. Visiting the museum has been free all year, thanks to a generous grant from First Interstate Bank.

Since we could not open until June 1, one of our highly anticipated exhibitions of work by Henry Farny, on loan from the Rentschler Collection of the University of Wyoming's American Heritage Center and made possible by a generous grant from the Edwin T. Meredith Foundation, became our first venture to engage our audience via video.

Director and Chief Curator Ken Schuster, with the aid of curatorial assistant Tyshon Bird, introduced a painting a week in our "Fridays with Farny" series. These videos and the series of interviews with area artists produced by Beverly Kleiber can be accessed on our website under the resource tab.

Speaking of resources, since school tours could not take place, our curators have been working with teachers to provide not only lesson plans and



Helen Morris, 9, paints on a transparency at The Brinton Museum's Art Camp Thursday, July 16, 2020.

projects based on the museum's collection and exhibits, but also virtual tours for their classes to keep in touch and provide opportunities for our school-age audience.

While we were not able to host the annual Brinton Gala this summer, The Brinton Museum participated in the WYOGIVES online fundraiser with much assistance and support from our National Advisory Council members. These ambassadors for The Brinton and several brand new as well as longtime supporters succeeded in bringing us past the halfway point of our goal of \$40,000 for our horse barn restoration project.

The barn has already been

an exciting new focal point of our extended grounds tour this summer. Many visitors took advantage of being chauffeured by our well-trained guides in golf carts all around the grounds and to the barn and back. Not only did our curatorial staff add an educational exhibit on horses and local horse culture in the old tack room, they also designed a new American Indian Doll showcase for our Plains Indian exhibition, which delights our young and young-at-heart patrons.

More exciting news for this fall: We are delighted to welcome Kendra Heimbeck, who joined The Brinton staff this week as our new director of operations. She brings

great expertise in arts and project management from her former occupations as director of SAGE and Habitat for Humanity in Jackson Hole.

Of course, as development director, my focus during these last few weeks of the year is on our year-end appeal in this season of giving. Our last day for 2020 will be Dec. 21.

We are already looking forward to reopening Feb. 14 and welcoming everyone with two new shows, a retrospective of the best of the last 15 illustrator exhibits and a brand new fifth grade art show, to start off 2021. See you at The Brinton!

BARBARA SCHUSTER is development director at The Brinton Museum.