A Word From the Director
BY DAVID CUNNINGHAM

Soon we will leave 2020 behind. The imposed and voluntary closures of our museums, lack of visitors, shortened hours of operation, cancelled events, and general dread of catching the virus made this a horrible year. The uncertainty, unfortunately, will likely continue throughout most of 2021.

However, COVID-19 forced the Meeteetse Museums and other cultural institutions to adjust and “call a number of audibles.” The most beneficial for us was the addition of new online/virtual programming, which reached new and varied audiences. Through these programs designed and implemented by Amy Phillips (Education and Programs Director), we were able to showcase Meeteetse’s history and wildlife to people from around the US and the world. Check it out on Facebook, our Youtube Channel, or our website. She and our Director of Collections, Alex Deselms, also created downloadable walking tours of the Ghost Town of Kirwin, the historic Double Dee Guest Ranch, and downtown Meeteetse. Download these on iziTravel.com.

Alex also continued making great strides in getting “control” of our collections. Caring for collections and keeping account of them should be the number one priority at any museum. It is certainly our primary objective here. You can now view and learn about many of our objects online for the first time, as they are included in PastPerfect Online. Go to meeteetsemuseums.org to check it out. By the way, we hope you enjoy our new website, funded by a grant from the Park County Travel Council!

Finally, the Board and staff of the Meeteetse Museum District wishes you a safe, healthy, and Merry Christmas, as well as a Happy New Year!
Artists from throughout the Bighorn Basin submitted their work to the "Art of the Basin" show. The show was juried by the Buffalo Bill Center of the West's Karen McWhorter and sculptor Vic Payne. Thanks to the generosity of sponsors Cody Ace Hardware, the Wea Market of Meeteetse, and Treasured Memories, we were able to award first, second, and third place prizes.

First Place (bottom left): "Encampment at Ramshorn" by Paul Kethley
Second place (right): "Crossing the Divide" by Larry Edgar
Third place (top left): "Wyoming's Flower" by Rhonda Schmeltzer

Thanks to the support of our visitors, we were able to sell four of the ten pieces that were for sale! This not only benefits the artists, a small portion goes toward the museum.
WHAT
This project aims to learn more about cranial morphology within the Bighorn Basin in relation to bison throughout the nation.

HOW
Meeteetse Museum staff take a series of measurements of the bison crania, see above photograph, to create a regional database. This regional database is then compared with a national database to learn more about bison in the Basin and beyond!

WHY
Bison were over-hunted in the 19th century. You may have seen the photographs of stacks of bison that dwarf the proud hunters nearby. That is the very reason we don't know everything we'd like to know about bison. This is the first step to be able to ask more complex questions.

COMMUNITY SCIENCE
This is a science project driven by the community. Without community involvement and support, we would only be able to access crania from museum collections. The community support is beyond valuable because crania found by the community spans both public and private lands. In total, we had 44 individuals bring in 64 bison crania (pictured on the map).

Additionally, this project aimed to promote Archaeology Awareness Month by changing the perception of bison crania from decor to a resource that can tell us about the history of our surrounding landscape.

So far, we have discovered that the bison brought in throughout the project belong to *Bison bison bison*. The majority are male, bull bison. They are smaller than the national dataset, which includes earlier subspecies of bison. Keep up with this project by following us on Facebook- we have exciting things in store!

Special thanks to Larry Todd and GRSLE Archaeology as well as the Homesteader Museum, Old Trail Town, and Washakie Museum and Cultural Center for helping with this project.
For the past year, we've been working on launching a podcast. A podcast is an audio production much like a radio talk show. The talk show nature of the podcast allowed us to bring history to life and focus on events and people from Meeteetse's history that the Museum doesn't necessarily have objects from or about.

Kathleen Holtzer's research on veterans of Meeteetse served as the inspiration and foundation for season 1. We used her research coupled with conversations with military historians and scholars to learn more about each conflict and the lives led by the veterans who served. The first season covers the Civil War, Indian Wars, World War I, and World War II.

The Meeteetse Museums would like to thank Kathleen for her wonderful research and insight into the lives of these men and women. Thanks as well to numerous volunteers from the community for bringing veterans to life including Bill Wiltse, Dave Randol, Larry Todd, and Curtis Larsen.

"Meeteetse Stories" can be found on Spotify, Stitcher, Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, and Podcasts.com by searching the title.

Cover art by Jenna Williams

The podcast and many of the Museums walking tours feature oral histories given by members of the community. Oral histories bring the town and its people to life. We are currently working on gathering oral history responses from members of the community about the COVID-19 pandemic and current events. Please visit this link to fill out a survey and help future generations bring today to life:
Our website was created by our wonderful web host and designer, Paul Davies, and made possible by a grant from the Park County Travel Council. Our staff spent time looking at other museum websites, listing features we liked, and building content.

The new website features PastPerfect Online, which was made possible by a grant from the Wyoming State Library. Our online collections are part of the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA), a national organization whose mission is to bring awareness to the humanities and cultural organizations by hosting virtual collections.

The Meeteetse Museums is a Local Government Entity so we're funded by a 1% mill levy. This 1% fluctuates from year-to-year but typically covers our operating expenses such as heating, salary for our professional staff, and maintenance. Donations allow us to provide more programming, finish exhibits, improve collections care and storage, travel to local schools for education, and more!

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We have exhibits planned covering A.A. Anderson, Carl Dunrud and Amelia Earhart, Kirwin, and local businesses. It typically costs roughly $100 per panel to create a new exhibit with additional costs for collection-safe lighting, exhibit cases, and interactives. The more donations we get, the more content we can produce.

We appreciate your support!

www.meeteetsemuseums.org
NEWS FROM PROGRAMS AND EDUCATION

Despite a strange year, the public programming for the Museum has been a success. Our virtual programming has reached new audiences throughout the country and world. Overall, we had over 230 people join us on Zoom for programming with almost 2,000 people on Facebook.

I am most excited about the Bison of the Bighorn Basin project and our new podcast. Both reach completely different audiences which is great since the museum has been closed so much due to COVID-19.

Additionally, our new website makes it easier for me to announce programming and work with educators. We can also publish articles on local history through the blog. Be sure to check it periodically and follow along on Facebook to stay up to date on all our activities.

If you have any local history you’d like to hear more about, please contact me at programs@meeteetsemuseums.org. As always, any donations to programming or education help us improve our museum interactives and outreach.

Amy Phillips
Director of Education and Programs

REFLECTIONS ON COLLECTIONS

2020 has been an interesting year for all of us, to say the least. We hope 2021 will eventually return things to “normal”. Like most of you, we are continuing to adapt to COVID circumstances and changes.

We are still accepting journals, photos, media, and artifacts about living in Meeteetse during COVID. Following the lead of other archives and museums, we have also created an online form or survey about COVID; this makes it easier for community members like you to donate without much preparation. Please contact us with questions or if you have something you’d like to offer besides filling out our survey. Remember, every day, we live through history and especially now with this pandemic; unless we consciously leave a record for the future, how will they know what we lived through and experienced?

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In October, we participated in a free follow-up to the Museum Assessment Program (MAP) on collections that the museum conducted in 2015. As with most things during COVID, it went virtual (for a couple hours on multiple days) instead of the day-and-a-half in-person visit. Our reviewer Jeanne discussed what had been done since her original visit and our plans going forward. It was helpful to bounce ideas off her and get new ideas to move forward. It also helped us see how far we’d come in improving collections care at the museum! As with many things, it’s hard to see your own progress when you’re in the trenches!

Our volunteer Pam Johnston continues to work on our photo inventory project. As usual, Pam is completing the drawers faster than I can scan them for her! We appreciate her important contribution while looking forward to her return to the office and cataloging collections into our database.

We haven’t forgotten about getting back to our Caring for Collections videos – we’ve just been focused on getting other in-progress projects completed! We plan to resume them next year. In the meantime, enjoy the podcast Amy did and our digital tours, exhibits, and online collections. Our PastPerfect Online site is up now and we will continue adding to it; you can visit it directly from our museum website. You can also find our online PP collections on the Digital Public Library of America site. For details on how to navigate the sites, please see the blog post on the newly updated website! We would like to again thank the Wyoming State Library for the grant to make this happen!

We held our Collections Committee both in-person and virtually to accommodate the committee members in early September. We appreciate the donors’ patience while we processed their donations in an unusual year. Getting PastPerfect Online up and assisting in the bison measuring community science project delayed the final processing of these items but I have now been able to start cataloging these items. We hope to finish cataloging them and get them online soon.

We participate in different contests and giveaways to further our goals without breaking our budget – and it paid off! Our name was drawn as the winner of a free museum collections cabinet (including free shipping)!! Thank you to the contest donor, Delta Designs Ltd! The cabinet was delivered on 11/23 and we are excited to begin using it.

Have a safe, happy, and healthy holiday season!

Alex Deselms
Director of Collections

Thank you!

Remember the quilt auction we had over Labor Day? With your help it was a massive success! We raised just over $1,000 for collections (yes, that’s the correct amount of zeroes!).

If you missed the online quilt show, it’s still up! Check it out by following this link:

If you would like to donate a quilt for next year’s quilt show, please let us know! You can call us at (307) 868-2423 or emailing programs@meeteetsemuseums.org.

Online Offersings

Online exhibits allow us to tell local history while keeping artifacts safe, saving floor space in the museum (it’s at a premium), and saving money. We’ll continue to add to our online exhibits over the coming months. For now, you can learn about schools in the area and see our quilt show. What’s next? Hint: it was a contributing factor to A.A. Anderson’s decision to advocate for a Forest Preserve.

If you weren’t able to visit the Museum this year, don’t worry! We’ve been working on a series of virtual tours that are up on our YouTube channel. We’ll continue to add content in the New Year so be sure to subscribe to the channel to stay up to date.

Did you know we can present to your group over Zoom? Whether it’s a Trivia night, dinner party, or happy hour, contact the Museum for a series of presentations. All we ask in return is a donation to help us keep providing local history.
Did You Know?

Our virtual programs reached over 5,000 people. That's roughly the number of visitors we have per year but for programming!

This year's theme was "update"! We updated our website, the Little Wahb exhibit, and programming.

Meeteetse was home to several veterans of the Civil War. These men fought for both the Union and the Confederacy. Read more on our website blog or listen to the Civil War episode of "Meeteetse Stories"!

Tell us what you think! There are QR codes throughout the museum that provide more information and feedback stations. Like the one in our revamped Little Wahb exhibit asking you for your thoughts on wolves!

The museum received 5 grants this year totaling $32,239.50.

Our new website features local history, a blog, and more so we can keep providing you with history!