

Exhibit looks for the unique and unusual side of Aurora

By Brock Weir

Aurora's history will be celebrated this summer in a special exhibit in the Aurora Room, bringing together artefacts from in and around the area to illustrate the Town's story.

Your artefacts, telling your own story about your own town could soon play a very important role in the exhibition as the Aurora Historical Society (AHS) looks for residents to have their say on the show.

Set to open Monday, July 1, in the Aurora Room, the exhibition will be the eleventh exhibition created by the Aurora Historical Society (AHS) since January, says the AHS. The scope of the society's exhibition work this year has included onsite, online and offsite exhibits. The 150th exhibit will feature selected artefacts from The Aurora Collection that support themes such as Aurora's natural history, industry, merchants, education, sport, and recreation, community spirit, technology and communication.

They issued the invitation to all Aurorans on Friday to collaborate in the creation of the exhibit by sharing their personal stories, artefacts, images or documents related to the Town's history.

It is a fitting component, as 50 years ago, AHS began collecting to celebrate the Town's centenary through community and volunteer collaboration. This was the beginning of The Aurora Collection.

It can't be just any old thing to make the cut, however. The Society stresses items and stories must relate directly to Aurora's history and, if you're interested in getting it in there, an appointment with Catherine Richards, curator for the AHS, to view the item must be made. Items will be considered temporary loans and will be returned to the owner by the end of November.

Deadline for submissions is Friday, May 31.

The exhibition is coming together after months of wrangling at the Council table not just over funding, but also logistics. There were also calls last month from heritage advocates outside the Aurora Historical Society, for the community to have more of a direct input in what will ultimately be on show to mark Aurora's story.

We have consistently worked with community organizations and individuals [and when we heard] David Heard and Christopher Watts came forward expressing interest, it was an additional impetus to see what others are interested in, Ms. Richards tells The Auroran.

There has been a history of working with volunteers and the community and that is how AHS started. It is fitting that in the 50th anniversary of the AHS, and the 150th of Aurora, we are going back to our roots and we hope there will be a response.

In going out to the public, they're not looking for typical, everyday objects, but something which might put a new spin or add a new chapter to something we're already familiar with. While the AHS has a Fleury plough, a rare Fleury sewing machine eludes them. This, says Ms. Richards, would show another aspect of Aurora's manufacturing industry.

It is those objects that really tell such a great story about Aurora, she says. We definitely have some pieces in the collection that do the same, so they will be coming out of the woodwork, and we are looking for those 'wow' pieces that just have an interesting element.

The AHS too will be doing their part to bring out the lesser-seen and/or more unusual items from their collection as part of this exhibit, including highly rare wooden boxes made by imprisoned local rebels after the 1837 Upper Canada rebellions.

They also plan on illustrating the matrimonial side of Aurora's history not with a wedding dress as one might expect, but a highly

unusual noisemaker, a mainstay at local weddings, which Ms. Richards says more resembles piece of farm equipment.

?You would expect to see a dress or maybe a garter, but this I a different angle in speaking to the community of the marital factor,? she says. ?[We're using this occasion] to look at the collection differently and I'm really excited about it.?

For more information, contact Ms. Richards at 905-727-8997 or email curator@aurorahs.ca, subject line ?150th Exhibition.?