

Historical Society wants your memories of 'Growing Up Aurora'?

History doesn't have to be big and splashy. Every day experiences are just as important in informing who we are, where we've been, and where we're going.

Big and splashy, or even just 'mundane,' the Aurora Historical Society wants to hear all your favourite memories of 'Growing Up in Aurora.'

This month, the Aurora Historical Society (AHS) launches its Growing Up Aurora exhibition, a compilation of stories and memories shared by Aurora residents about the community they call home.

'When people think of museums, they often think about the Victorian period or earlier; they don't think of the more recent history and part of the reason for this exhibit is to highlight the more recent time period and get people involved because I think people are very nostalgic for these memories,' says AHS curator Kathleen Vahey. 'This has been in the back of our minds for a few years, but things kind of got derailed with COVID. We're starting to come back and just doing a push for it to come out this summer as a constantly-evolving project.'

'We're never going to be able to capture every single memory of every single person in Aurora, but the purpose is to just continually be collecting stories, memories and things in perpetuity; this is kind of a kicking-off point to getting people thinking about it.'

The AHS is making a concerted effort in this instance to focus less on the Town's early history. Instead, they want memories of events and 'things' related to the Aurora Horse Show, early Canada Day celebrations, and even of trips just to get an ice cream cone at a corner store.

'I'm learning a lot researching, talking to people, talking about old photos, the different spots to hang out,' says Vahey. 'I know we're a huge Canada Day town and have been for years; of the Horse Show, because that isn't around anymore; but what was it like going to school here? I know the schools have changed and morphed as well, but I think it all comes around to how much it has stayed the same as well.'

'People like to say, 'Oh, back in the good old days,' and 'things have changed so much, it's not like it used to be,' but kids are still growing up in Aurora, making great memories, and doing similar things. Maybe it has changed a little bit, but I think I think people will be surprised with the connections they might be able to make between the older and younger generations as well. It can be very mundane things that you maybe wouldn't think of, like someone submitting a picture of their cheerleading group from high school in the '70s. They may not have won any championships [but one person said], 'We just had so much fun and just laughed all the time. It was a great time and I loved it.' Those are just as important as the championship-winning games.'

The aim of the new exhibition and ongoing project is less about the material objects than about the memories, so the AHS encourages everyone growing up or having grown up in Aurora to head over to their website and fill out the form that has some memory prompts. Once the exhibition is fully up and running, visitors to the AHS' Hillary House National Historic Site will be able to write down their memories for them to be pinned up alongside those of their neighbours.

For more, visit aurorahs.com/growing-aurora.

By Brock Weir
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