

Library's Camera Club takes Aurora back to the future



By Brock Weir

In some instances the contrasts are drastic, while in others there is barely any difference in the landscape other than the styles of cars and the fashions of passers-by.

Whether these landscapes and streetscapes have been re-shaped by hand, or remain stalwart survivors of this area's past, both are now firmly in focus at the Aurora Public Library.

Aurora: Then and Now, a refreshed exhibit curated by the Aurora Public Library Camera Club was hung in the Library's Colleen Abbott Gallery this month. Juxtaposing vintage images from the Aurora Collection overlain with contemporary shots of the same building, streetscape or landscape, the exhibition was originally created in 2013 to coincide with Aurora's Sesquicentennial Celebrations.

It is now back for all to see through April 17.

"It was a great deal of fun doing this and the actual photographs were a real step back in time for me because I have been a resident of the Town since I was about 13," says Camera Club member Rick Armstrong. "I remembered a great many things that went on as a result of looking at some of the photos and it is a real trip down memory lane. I enjoyed this quite a bit and it has provided a bit of notoriety to the members who have been involved."

The show was put together by club founder Ronen Grunberg, who brought the group together to attract like-minded people to grow artistically and create an environment in which they can share their work. When they began working on the project in 2012, they were given access to hundreds of photos to look through.

"Then we tried to connect what is there now to the original," says Mr. Grunberg. "What I learned is the Town has an enormous history and it is an interesting place. A lot of people just think it is a little town in the middle of Ontario, no big deal. But, there is so much history and so much that has happened here. It gives you an appreciation of the people who lived here 100 or 150 years ago on this very spot we now move around in and call our home."

"People have called it home for a very, very long time and this connects you to those people and places. Looking at the old photos gives you an appreciation of just how things both stay the same and change. There is a familiarity and yet it is also very different."

Turning to his fellow photographers, he added: "I don't know about you but it gives me a strange sense of how 150 years from now people will be looking at photographs that were taken now and they will be saying the same thing."

?If photography still exists!? exclaimed Claire d'Aurore with a smile.

For more information on this exhibition, and upcoming shows and events at the Aurora Public Library, visit www.library.aurora.on.ca.