

Show and Tell for Grown Ups teases out and inspires personal stories

We all remember the days of standing in front of our classmates with something really cool in hand, sharing the wide-eyed tale of how you got it and what it means.

But age doesn't mean it's time to put away the wonderment; it's alive and well within grown-ups as the Aurora Public Library, in association with the Aurora Museum & Archives launches Show & Tell for Grown-Ups ? and here your ?classroom? is your screen over zoom.

?Back in March, we were looking at programming that we could offer the Library and the community a chance to really connect with one another because that has really been missing,? says Kathryn Stark of the Aurora Public Library. ?We know the Library is a social place for so many of our users who want to come in and chat with the staff members and other patrons and [as we] really had no idea what the future would bring, we wanted something that would transition from a virtual program to maybe a hybrid in-person program at some point.?

People in Aurora have ?fascinating? histories and using objects near and dear to their hearts as a springboard for discussion is a chance to share and learn about everything from family history to travel destinations.

Ahead of the program launch, Ms. Stark says she anticipated people bringing anything from antiques to baked goods perfected during pandemic downtime, or even flowers or ?gigantic vegetables? from the garden.

In the first iteration last week, Ms. Stark brought a locket that was a wedding present to her great-grandmother (and namesake) that is very close to her heart, while representatives from the Aurora Museum & Archives brought a stereoscope which is akin to a Victorian Viewmaster.

?The locket is not actually worth anything other than sentimental value to myself because it has pictures of both my great-grandparents in it and as I was named after her it really has a special connection,? says Ms. Stark. ?It is about that connection to my past, to be able to see the family resemblance in the pictures of my great-grandparents, my grandmother, my father, myself and now my children and having that connection to the past is hopefully something I will be able to pass onto my children in the future.

?We really want people to be able to share items that are of importance to them. People might not have had the chance to really connect with people outside their households for the past 16 months, so we really want people to be social and be able to share something and really strike up conversations with people outside their immediate household.

?It might even be a photograph. Fewer and fewer people are printing out their physical photographs, so even if someone had a few pictures from their vacation ten or 15 years ago, I think that would make for a fantastic item to show as it brings out a whole wealth of conversation: the places you've been, the physical experience itself, as well as the memories that are attached to it.?

The next Show and Tell for Grown Ups sessions will take place on August 9 and September 13 from 10 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. To book your place, visit bit.ly/3v4Sfwb.

By Brock Weir Editor Local Journalism Initiative Reporter