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FEATURED

Time capsule of 2016 Haverhill

FROZEN IN TIME

By Mike LaBella mlabela@eagletribune.com Jun 2, 2016



PAUL BILODEAU/Staff photo

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HAVERTHILL — Imagine a day 25 years from now.

You are an adult and you've been invited to attend a time capsule unveiling at Harbor Place. You think back to your younger days in elementary school and try to recall what suggestions you and your classmates made then that might have wound up in the capsule.

It was buried by the people who built Harbor Place in the eastern end of downtown.

If you were a student in Kerri Alves' second-grade class at Tilton School or Maria Godfrey's sixth-grade class at Hunking School or Jay Fiorentini's History of Haverhill class at Haverhill High, there's a good chance that some items wound up in the capsule because of you.

If you were in Alves' class, you were 7 or 8 at the time. At the opening of the time capsule, you're 32 or 33 and maybe have a family of your own.

Whether it's a box of crayons, a stuffed "Tilton tiger," photos of Haverhill's downtown, a Kindle or a pre-Harriet Tubman \$20 bill, whatever is unveiled that day should be appreciated by all in attendance.

Merrimack Street Venture Properties, developer of Harbor Place, and the Team Haverhill civic group are organizing the time capsule project. The capsule will be placed in Harbor Place. It replaces the old Woolworth building and several other structures, bringing in a UMass Lowell satellite campus, apartments and businesses.

Items proposed by local students, including student-written messages, along with other entries voted on through an online poll, will be placed in the capsule. The time capsule dedication ceremony is scheduled for June 15 at 11 a.m. in the Pentucket Bank community room.

Tim Jordan, a member of Team Haverhill and the Greater Haverhill Foundation business group, recently visited the Tilton, Hunking and Haverhill High schools to gather suggestions from students. They were also asked to write a "message in a bottle" addressed to Haverhill residents of the future. One letter from each participating school will be placed in a bottle inside the time capsule. The capsule will be opened in 2041.

Tilton students offered numerous suggestions, including a remote control helicopter, an American flag and Pokemon cards.

"The box won't be big enough to hold a basketball, but in 2041 we'll open it to see what's interesting in our lives today," Jordan said.

Student Aulani Melendez suggested a Kindle, while student Tiem Dugh suggested a cell phone "to see how much technology has changed."

Student Sean Ziminkski thought hard before offering his suggestion, and explained why it made sense.

"How about a Pokemon card?" he said. "They have changed over the years."

Alves said she planned to bring her students to the time capsule dedication as a living lesson in history.

"This will be a once-in-a-lifetime experience," Alves said.

Jordan said he also received many suggestions from students at Hunking School. Ideas included a copy of the video game "Call of Duty," pictures of the Merrimack River as it looks now, a 2016 Hillie jersey, a brick from the old Woolworth building which was demolished to make way for Harbor Place, photos of animals on the endangered species list such as the Blanding's turtle, and pictures of the current Hunking School, which will be demolished once the new Hunking opens next year.

"Hunking students also suggested a \$20 bill, before the government releases the new bill with an image of Harriet Tubman, and something related to this year's historic presidential election," Jordan said.

Haverhill High students suggested a "Free Brady" T-shirt, business cards representing current businesses in Haverhill, a copy of The Eagle-Tribune with a story about the time capsule dedication, and a current Red Sox roster.

"We plan to cull the suggestions down to about 20," Jordan said. "Then have the public vote."

The Greater Haverhill Foundation is building the \$70 million Harbor Place project in partnership with the Planning Office for Urban Affairs, the nonprofit residential development arm of the Boston Catholic Archdiocese.

In addition to student contributions, Team Haverhill is also gathering suggestions of items particularly significant to today's Haverhill that can fit in the capsule, which is roughly 18 inches long, 16 inches wide and 9 inches deep.

Anyone who lives or works in Haverhill should send their suggestions to Jordan at tjjordan94@gmail.com. Team Haverhill will compile a list of top suggestions and the public will be invited to vote for favorites on the Team Haverhill website and Facebook page after June 6.