

Capsule that time nearly forgot retrieved for Kenmore alumni, with big reveal Friday

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In the spring of their senior year, members of the Kenmore High School class of 1996 buried a time capsule filled with pictures, letters and other keepsakes, planning to unearth it 25 years later. In January, Nick Korora, a member of the class of 1996, recalled burying the capsule and decided it was time to open it.

Korora said in 1996 it was also his idea to bury the capsule, inviting his classmates to store an envelope with whatever items they chose to freeze in

time. Many students answered a questionnaire with topics such as “What type of music do you listen to and who is your favorite group?” or “If you could tell your future self something what would it be?”

Because 25 years after the initial burial ended up being during the COVID-19 pandemic, Korora said the class missed opening it on time. Realizing the unearthing date had passed, Korora said he wanted to open the capsule to generate support for the Kenmore Cowbell 7K put on by Akron Promise.



The event is part of the Akron Promise City Series Neighborhood Races, which raises money to eliminate obstacles Akron Public School students face in obtaining educational and professional opportunities.

Korora, director of the Kenmore race, said he brought the idea of opening the capsule to Tom Ghinder, founder of Akron Promise, who was immediately on board.

“I think it's a great opportunity for that Class of '96 and the people that they knew — older and younger — to get together and relive some memories and exchange information,” Ghinder said.

Korora said he reached out to Akron Public Schools to find the capsule, and within three days it was retrieved by the grounds crew and able to be picked up. To locate the capsule, Korora said he contacted one of his Kenmore classmates, Marian Shoemaker, who had photos of where the capsule was buried.

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Ghinder said when he picked the capsule up from the APS garage, it was completely frozen and slightly cracked open. After he brought it home and the capsule began defrosting, Ghinder said he realized it was full of water.

“We made the mistake of trying to thaw it out,” Korora said. “I guess that's the worst thing you can do. Water dominates paper—I've learned a lot about document restoration.”

Korora said he called Prism Specialities, a restoration company, to have the letters and photos in the capsule revived, and Danielle DeLorge, director of sales and commercial product manager at Prism Specialities, immediately told him to put the capsule back in the freezer in order to prevent further damage from the water.



Meticulous work goes into saving Kenmore time capsule's contents

DeLorge said by keeping the capsule in the freezer, they were able to prevent further mold damage than what occurred while it was underground. After freezing the full capsule, DeLorge said they took apart the actual outside of the

capsule to access the documents inside — since it was swollen with water damage.

DeLorge said the time capsule was buried with a rubber duck inside that disintegrated, causing severe odor. After drying the items out, DeLorge said the items were kept in a deodorizing room for over a month.

To dry the documents, DeLorge said they placed the items in a controlled air drying room; when the room reached a certain temperature, they were able to separate individual pieces to place on a drying rack.

“It's time-consuming because it's individual,” DeLorge said. “Piece by piece, paper by paper, but it was a success story, so I was really happy with how it turned out.”

Certain photographs and documents were stuck together, so DeLorge said they placed the items in a photo bath to detach them without further damage.

DeLorge said Prism Specialities was able to save many documents either wholly or partially, but if the ink from any letters had bled, they couldn't bring back the original piece.

After Prism Specialities restored as many items as possible, Ghinder said he was able to identify 30 full names and a similar amount of other content that could be used to potentially identify an owner.

The time capsule will be opened Friday at the Better Kenmore First Friday event at 6 p.m.. The Kenmore Cowbell 7K will take place the following morning. All materials found in the capsule will be distributed to their original owners.

Korora said he chose not to look at any of the items recovered from the time capsule and instead decided to wait until he could open his envelope with his classmates, preferring the capsule to be a surprise.

Korora said he remembers writing a letter to his future wife and children. He had no idea at the time that he'd end up marrying a fellow member of the class of '96.

“My wife and I graduated in the same class,” Korora said. “I liked her then, but she didn't really like me. You know, the friendzone thing.”

Korora said he doesn't know if his letters were able to be restored, but he's looking forward to finding out with his fellow classmates and his wife, Lori, on Friday.

Korora said people often ask him why he is doing this for Kenmore.

“Well, one, Kenmore deserves it,” Korora said. “I went to Kenmore, and I'm trying to give back. So many people can sit behind the computer and complain and in my opinion—have a solution for your problem. Don't just say ‘This needs fixed.’”



Buried treasure creates chance to reunite Kenmore alumni

Shoemaker, a member of the class of '96, said the capsule offers an opportunity to reunite with her old classmates without any awkwardness. Instead, she said it gives them something to laugh about.

Pam Rockich, class of '96 student president, said uncovering the capsule has given her a unique perspective as she watches her daughter graduate high school this year while simultaneously reliving memories of herself graduating in 1996.

Sean Blake, president of the Kenmore Historical Society, said the capsule serves to enrich the community in Kenmore, especially in the face of many neighborhood staples, like Kenmore High School, closing.

Blake said when he was growing up the Kenmore neighborhood had a lot of pride, so now he can't stand to let himself see the love for the community disappear.

"I can feel the pride coming back," Blake said.



<https://www.beaconjournal.com/story/news/local/2024/06/06/ohio-kenmore-high-school-alumni-reveal-class-of-96-time-capsule-items-akron-public-schools-aps-news/73908361007/>