

The 2000 Time Capsule

By Barbara Glakas

What was happening during the year 2000 millennium? Some people predicted it would be the end of the world. Also known as the Y2K problem, others anticipated a potential problem in the coding of computerized systems which many feared would create havoc in computer systems around the world.

Millenium celebrations occurred around the world. In the United States, President Clinton and thousands of spectators watched the Washington Monument light up at midnight. In New York's Times Square, a ball was dropped made of Waterford Crystal. Billy Joel performed in Madison Square Garden, where he sang "Auld Lang Syne" at midnight. Neil Diamond sang "America" at the Pepsi Center in Denver. Disney had a millennium celebration at the Epcot theme park in Florida. It seemed like every jurisdiction around America had fireworks. And I went to Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, to watch the sun come up above the Atlantic Ocean horizon on the early morning of January 1, 2000.

Back in Herndon, the winter of 1999-2000 saw a lot of snow. The Town was getting ready to launch a new website; the town council was discussing road improvements at the intersections of Park Avenue and Monroe and Station Streets; and a \$50,000 grant was award to the Herndon/Reston American Legion Post 184 for the construction of an obelisk veteran's memorial on the Town Green.

Herndon also buried a millennial time capsule. It was noted in a set of Herndon Historical Society minutes, dated November 12, 1999, that the *Herndon Observer* newspaper contacted the President of the Historical Society to see if the Society would be interested in participating in developing a time capsule to commemorate the millennium. The Society thought it was a good idea and agreed. No other notes appear in the Historical Society minutes, other than one short entry in February of 2000 which indicated that the time capsule had been buried.

An ad appeared in a December 12, 1999, edition of the *Herndon Observer*, announcing the Millennium Time Capsule project, inviting everyone in the community to participate by donating items for the time capsule. "Photographs, letters, books and other items are welcome." Items could be dropped off or mailed to the Observer's office, no later than January 21, 2000. The plan was to bury a time capsule in Herndon's Town Square on January 29th. A plaque would mark the spot and the capsule would not be open for 100 years. In the addition to the *Observer* and the Historical Society, the Town of Herndon was also listed as a sponsor.

Another *Herndon Observer* article dated February 11, 2000, covered the burying of the time capsule which occurred the previous week on Saturday, January 29th. A brief ceremony was held inside the Herndon Depot. Those who posed for a ceremonial photo of the burying of the time capsule were Mayor Tom Rust, Carol Bruce of the Town Council and the Herndon Historical Society, and several members of the *Herndon Observer* staff, including Will Grein, Chris Moore, Betsy Grein and Liz Crotty. "After a few brief remarks, the cylindrical capsule was deposited into the hole."

The newspaper article listed the contents of the time capsule. Among them, were:

- A 2000 Town of Herndon calendar.
- Circulars showing prices of items from the Safeway grocery store, CVS drug store and Sears.
- A copy of the cemetery master plan, adopted in 1999.
- Six of the new quarter, minted in the year 2000.
- A one-dollar bill and other coins.
- Selected photographs of event in 1999, covered by the *Observer*.
- A letter written by a young Herndon resident.
- The 1999 year-end edition, and the 2000 New Year edition of the *Washington Post*.
- A copy of the first town calendar from 1974.
- A Herndon telephone book.
- Several copies of the *Herndon Observer*.
- Submissions from two Herndon classrooms that included letter to the children of the future and items of general interest.
- A historical guide to Herndon.
- A copy of the *Observer's* 1999 Community Guide.
- A letter signed by the participants in the capsule burial.

The plaque that sits above the time capsule site says:

“On this spot lies a time capsule buried on Jan. 29, 2000, by the residents of the Town of Herndon, VA. The capsule is to be opened on Jan. 29, 2100 as a window to the past for tomorrow’s residents of this community”

Make sure to tell your grandchildren about it!

About this column: “Remembering Herndon’s History” is a regular Herndon Patch feature offering stories and anecdotes about Herndon’s past. The articles are written by members of the Herndon Historical Society. Barbara Glakas is a member. A complete list of “Remembering Herndon’s History” columns is available on the Historical Society website at www.herndonhistoricalsociety.org.

The Herndon Historical Society operates a small museum that focuses on local history. It is housed in the Herndon Depot in downtown Herndon on Lynn Street and is open every Sunday from noon until 3:00. Visit the Society’s website at www.herndonhistoricalsociety.org, and the

Historical Society's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/HerndonHistory> for more information.

Note: The Historical Society is seeking volunteers to help keep the museum open each Sunday. If you have an interest in local history and would like to help, contact HerndonHistoricalSociety@gmail.com.