

## LUNCH BOX TIME CAPSULE

Columbus, Ga., February 27, 2020- The Airport Art Program is pleased to announce that an exciting new exhibit is available for passengers to enjoy through October, 2020. The exhibit, titled Lunch Box Time Capsule, is located in a display case near Gate E-14 on the Boarding Level of Concourse E. The exhibit is the result of a partnership with the Lunch Box Museum located in Columbus Georgia and features over 80 lunch boxes that cover almost every decade from the 1920's till the 2000's.

Lunch boxes not only carried our sandwiches, snacks and Thermos throughout our school years, they also communicated our interests of all things cool. Lithographed tin (and later, plastic and vinyl) emblazoned with everything from Superman vanquishing his foes to Strawberry Shortcake exploring Strawberryland made lunchtime a bit more entertaining. Over the decades, lunch boxes helped to chronicle popular culture — especially what was popular on television and in theaters. From “Bonanza” to “Gunsmoke,” from “The Six Million Dollar Man” to “Star Wars,” lunch boxes are cultural time capsules.

Lunch boxes started out of necessity during the Industrial Revolution when workers had to tote their lunch and needed something to protect it. Early examples were woven baskets or repurposed metal biscuit tins with fitted pails and boxes appearing around the 1850s. The first patents for lunch boxes came in the 1860s. In 1904, the first Thermos — a vacuum container that enabled hot or cold beverages to remain at desired temperatures — was introduced. In 1935, the first character-licensed lunch box featured Mickey Mouse and had a pullout tray, but no Thermos. In 1950, Aladdin Industries introduced the Hopalong Cassidy lunch box, which was the first one produced that was based upon a television show. It made its debut just in time for back-to-school sales and went on to sell 600,000 units at \$2.39 each.

Anyone who carried a lunch box can usually conjure up a strong memory. From the glass liner in the Thermos breaking before the industry changed to foam insulation, the distinctive smell that most lunch boxes maintained (mine was bologna, yikes!), to a favorite character embossed on the side.

When airport co-workers were polled for their lunch box story, one said his mom used to pour boiling hot dog water accompanied with hot dogs in his Thermos and pack the buns and condiments separately so he could have toasty hot dogs for lunch. We still find him eating hot dogs for lunch at his desk! Another recalled trading his mom's incredible homemade chocolate chip or peanut butter cookies for store-bought snacks like Oreos because his dad would not buy them. And, unfortunately, there is usually a story of someone using their lunch box as a metal truncheon which resulted in the industry shifting to plastic in 1986, a change that was most likely made due to the higher costs of metal compared with plastic.

We hope this exhibit takes viewers on a stroll through popular culture and connects them to their favorite lunch box memory.

## THE LUNCH BOX MUSEUM

The Rivermarket Antique Mall in Columbus, Georgia is home to the largest Lunch Box Museum in the world. The museum has attracted visitors from all over the world and has been featured in many newspaper articles and on national television including “CBS Sunday Morning.” This unique attraction is the vision of collector Allen Woodall who assembled the collection from innumerable sources. Allen even co-authored “The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Metal Lunch Boxes.” The Museum features thousands of metal lunch boxes, including extras that are available for sale or trade, that cover the gamut of popular culture. For more information about the museum, visit [www.thelunchboxmuseum.com](http://www.thelunchboxmuseum.com).

The Airport Art Program is proud to present this exhibit for your enjoyment. For more information about this exhibit please email [Benjamin.austin@atl.com](mailto:Benjamin.austin@atl.com) or contact 404-382-2250.