



Bonita Unified

SCHOOL DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Bonita Unified Time Capsule Unearthing Reunites 1994 Students, Teachers

SAN DIMAS – La Verne Heights students and alumni laughed and reminisced as they unearthed a Diet Pepsi can, floppy disk, Pogs and 25-year-old essays predicting flying cars, hoverboards, a cancer cure and the end to war on May 30 from a time capsule buried at the school in 1994.

“In an age where everything moves superfast, I hope this experience gives my students a chance to pause,” said La Verne Heights teacher Lauren Barnes, who was a fifth-grader and student council president at the school when the capsule was buried. “I hope they pause and think about the things that are really important to them and about all of their opportunities for the future.”

“I could have never imagined how special my journey would be, returning to teach at my own elementary school, running programs I enjoyed as a child and having my former teachers as colleagues and even friends,” said Barnes, who joined the La Verne Heights staff in 2008.

A handful of former teachers and staff members reminisced with one another as a few current students attempted to hoist the receptacle from the ground. It was buried in front of an oak tree monument at the front of the school.

The Bonita Unified maintenance employee who shoveled down to the capsule, Jim Spiottot, is also a former La Verne Heights Lion.

The time capsule receptacle crumbled during the retrieval process, exposing the items for students to lift out one by one: a book about the history of La Verne, old newspaper clippings, a school yearbook, the Pepsi can, a school bumper sticker and laminated student essays about the future. A floppy disk, an object completely foreign to the youngsters present, was clearly the most outdated item.

“We decided to create a time capsule in 1994 when a large oak tree in front of the school was removed to widen Baseline Road,” said Marcia Pateau, who was La Verne Heights principal at the time. “It provided an opportunity for students to bury items typifying their generation, along with their predictions for the future. It’s an incredible experience to return over two decades later and connect with my former students as adults, many who now have their own children attending Bonita Unified schools.”

The items retrieved from the time capsule will be on display at the school through June 4, providing La Verne Heights students the opportunity to visit the exhibits to draw inspiration as they embark on the development of their own time capsule that will be scheduled for retrieval in 2044.

Barnes will help students create items for the new time capsule, which will be buried at the school later this year when former La Verne Heights student Spencer Gardner, soon to be a junior at Bonita High School, renovates the oak tree monument in pursuit of his Eagle Scout award.

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“At Bonita Unified we help prepare all students to live their purpose, and it is not uncommon that they find their purpose is to return to enrich our community,” Superintendent Carl J. Coles said. “In 25 years, we’ll be excited to welcome today’s fifth-graders back to share how they are living their purpose, just as Bonita Unified helped Mrs. Barnes to live hers.”

PHOTOS

BONITA_LA VERNE HEIGHTS TIMECAPSULE_1: La Verne Heights fifth-grader Marcus Friedrichsen inspects a floppy disk retrieved from a 1994 time capsule.

BONITA_LA VERNE HEIGHTS TIMECAPSULE_2: Lauren Barnes, right, was La Verne Heights fifth-grader and student council president in 1994 when the time capsule was buried. Barnes now teaches fifth grade at La Verne Heights and serves as student council advisor.

BONITA_LA VERNE HEIGHTS TIMECAPSULE_3: Jim Spiotto, Bonita Unified maintenance employee and former student of La Verne Heights Elementary, helped dig out the time capsule items.

BONITA_LA VERNE HEIGHTS TIMECAPSULE_4: Items from the 1994 time capsule included a floppy disk, Pogs, a Diet Pepsi can and several laminated student letters containing predictions about how the world would be in 2019.

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