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Lost in time : Mountain View School opens time capsule from 1967

By ELIZABETH HAMILTON, NEWS-PRESS STAFF WRITER
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Almost 47 years ago, on June 4, 1967, teachers and students at the new Mountain View School in Goleta packed a plastic bag full of photos, microfilm and notes written by children about what the future would look like. They placed the bag in a cubby hole behind a bronze plate marking the school's cornerstone.

Until Friday, the time capsule had only been opened twice: once in 1977 on the school's 10-year anniversary, and again on its 20th, in 1987. More photos and predictions were added each time, and the capsule was resealed.

Another 27 years and a generation of students passed, but the capsule lay forgotten.

It might still be collecting dust if not for Jim Spink, a 1970s Mountain View graduate whose 9-year-old son, Kyle, is in third grade at the school.

Mr. Spink's mother, Doris Spink, had been an active PTA parent at the elementary school. When she died in 2013 and Mr. Spink began sorting her things, he discovered a stash of fragile school papers from the 1960s and 1970s.

Among her papers: school newsletters, photographs of classrooms — and two articles written by the News-Press in 1977.

Mr. Spink didn't look too closely at the articles before giving them to Mountain View Principal Ned Schoenwetter last summer.

When Mr. Schoenwetter had time to read them this week, he was shocked.

"I didn't know we had a time capsule. It's an adventure to find this long lost treasure."

On Friday, more than a quarter of a century since its last opening, Kyle Spink and Mr. Schoenwetter unscrewed the plaque and opened the time capsule while students at Mountain View looked on in amazement.

The plastic bag was in tatters, but the predictions, photos and microfilm were still intact.

Mr. Schoenwetter read aloud some of the predictions made by students in 1967.

He said a student in Mrs. Jill Clevenger's fifth-sixth grade class had this to say about the year 2017:

"A teacher will guide you in the use of television and computer learning. No school building, as in 1967, will be needed. Instead of learning Spanish, we predict you will learn Chinese or maybe one language for all people. Students can take medication to improve the brain. Children will still object to learning."

Karen Wilson predicted, "in 50 years everyone will be living on the moon, and there would be stores and things."

Rick Brailey wrote, "When this school is old, we will have jets on our backs to get around."

As students laughed at the predictions, Mr. Schoenwetter said, "I'm glad this prediction did not come true. Carlene Lovin said, 'This school will be old, and maybe in ruins.'"



Mountain View School Principal Ned Schoenwetter, left, along with parent Jim Spink and his 9-year-old son, Kyle, opens the time capsule that included items from 1967, 1977 and 1987 while the rest of the school watches a live video in the auditorium.

MIKE ELIASON/NEWS-PRESS PHOTOS



Mr. Schoenwetter shows Mountain View School students the contents of the time capsule in the auditorium.

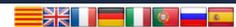
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Mr. Schoenwetter also shared photographs from the time capsule via an iPad and projector.

"Here's how parents dressed in the 1960s when they came to school," he said, showing a photo of parents attending an assembly dressed in horn-rimmed glasses and suits.

A photo of the 1970s office manager with large round glasses solicited riotous laughter from the students.

"I think this might be a cutting edge technology of the 1960s and 1970s," he said, holding up a black floppy disk.

Mountain View students from the 1970s and 1980s also attended the unveiling.

Debbie Darke, who has two kids who graduated from Mountain View and one who still attends, and who placed a prediction in the capsule in 1977, was texting her friends about the time capsule during the presentation.

"All of the Mountain View alumni that I still keep in touch with all wonder whatever happened to this time capsule," she said.

Mr. Schoenwetter said the students would continue the time capsule legacy by writing their own predictions for the future.

"We're going to put all this back so in another 20 or 30 years students and maybe your kids at some point can open it up and see what Mountain View was like."

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