

Lin-Wood Elementary School opens thirty-year-old time capsule

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LINCOLN - The Lin-Wood Elementary School opened a time capsule from 1991 during a thirty-year celebration earlier this month. Although it was intended to be opened after fifty years, school officials determined an early reveal would be a morale boost for students after the educational challenges brought on by COVID.

According to SAU 68 Financial Manager Debbie O'Connor, a Lincoln-Woodstock resident delivered a letter from 1991 to her office one year ago. The letter described a time capsule hidden in one of the columns of the newly-constructed elementary school and encouraged community involvement via a contest.

"After locating the column and what looked like a hiding spot, the school administration discussed having a celebration and opening the time capsule in the fall of 2021. After a tough school year with COVID, we thought it would be something positive and fun to share with the students," said O'Connor.

Administrators chose Oct 6 as the unveiling date, as it was exactly thirty years from the date school officials first hid the capsule. Superintendent Dr. Judith McGann welcomed the students to the unveiling ceremony last Wed before introducing Principal Mark Pribbernow and Assistant Principal Virginia Everett.

The administrators read the letter from 1991 and then introduced former administrators Robert Nelson and Mike Weaver. According to the letter addressed to parents and

family members, the school planned to host a community-wide competition.

Four items would be selected for inclusion, and the winning entries would receive a dinner certificate from the Woodstock Inn. Unfortunately, neither O'Connor nor Nelson could recall seeing anything other than class folders during the reveal.

Now retired, Nelson was the school's Assistant Principal from 1988 to 2000, when he became the Principal. He retired in 2017, after 40 years with the school district.

Weaver was a fourth-grade teacher when the time capsule was sealed in 1991. He retired from the Assistant Principal position approximately eight years ago, after more than 20 years with the school district.

The students celebrated with cake and juice after the two PVC tubes were cracked open. At the same time, administrators placed all of the time capsule contents on tables for the staff and students to view.

There was a folder of papers for each classroom, from kindergarten to fifth grade. Many of the handwritten notes included photographs, drawings and future predictions. O'Connor said the contents were in surprisingly good shape, given their age.

Several of the students were delighted to discover photographs and handwritten notes from their parents as children. Administrative Assistant Shelia Rich noted that flying cars were prevalent throughout the documents.

"Everything was going to be animatronic. I wondered how the kids came up with a prediction like flying cars or



Handwritten notes, drawings and photographs dating back to 1991 were revealed during a thirty-year celebration at the Lin-Wood Elementary School last week.

if the idea came from a popular television show at the time," said Rich.

O'Connor said she was standing at one of the tables as students began to review the time capsule contents. She recalled, "Two of the kids showed me pictures of their fathers and their class folder submissions from 1991. They were very excited."

Former Principal Nelson said he'd forgotten about the time capsule completely, but he vaguely remembered a community initiative for the project.

"When we built the school, time capsules were quite the thing to do. It was a way to capture community history, and we jumped on the bandwagon. We had numerous discussions as to what it would look like, and it seems a great opportunity to be able to preserve some of the things that were going on during that time," explained Nelson.

The former administrator noted that modern concepts like Facebook, Twitter, websites and email were unheard of in 1991.

"Words that are connected to us now primarily deal with technology. Opening the time capsule gave us a glimpse into how much the community and the world have changed over the last thirty



A thirty-year-old time capsule from Lin-Wood Elementary students in 1991 was opened in Lincoln last week and will be replaced with new materials from the school's current student body before Thanksgiving.


years. How students communicate now is quite different than it was in the early 90s, but it was really interesting to take a look at all of that information," stated Nelson.

Nelson also noted that many students from the early 90s wrote down their wishes for the future. He said that one underlying hope was that the world would be safe.

"Some of those predictions were way off, and some of them were quite accurate. The younger students described what they wanted to be when they grew up, while the older kids had a different way to process what the world would look like," explained Nelson.

According to O'Connor, school officials intend to create a new time capsule with the current students. In addition to items submitted by the students, the administrators also planned to include his-

"We hope that in another 20 or 30 years, the next generation will find the time capsules and see what was happening back in 2021," said O'Connor.



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