



Bonita Unified

SCHOOL DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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History of Bonita Unified's Smudge Pot Football Rivalry Comes Alive in Student-Created Website

SAN DIMAS/LA VERNE – For generations of Bonita Unified students, staff and alumni, the annual Smudge Pot football game is the most anticipated athletic event of the school year. The cherished football rivalry that pits the Bonita High School Bearcats against the San Dimas High School Saints will celebrate its golden anniversary this year, as the schools prepare to play their 50th game in the series, which began in 1972.

To honor the memories, sportsmanship and heroics of the game, which is one of the oldest continuous rivalries in southern California, the Smudge Pot's rich and colorful history has now come alive in a newly created [website](#) dedicated to the players, coaches, students and administrators who have worked tirelessly over the years to establish the game as a way to unite the Bonita Unified community.

The website, meticulously researched and developed by Bonita High students as part of their senior year Purpose-Driven, Active, Career Exploration (PACE) project, features photos, news clippings and decade-by-decade accounts of the competition named after the smudge pot, an oil-burning device used to heat citrus trees that was omnipresent in the orange groves of La Verne and San Dimas for more than half a century.

The Smudge Pot website is the brainchild of Bonita High computer science and graphic design teacher Dr. John McGarvey. McGarvey taught history and web design at San Dimas High School from 1992 to 2008 before coming to Bonita High. During this time, McGarvey delighted in hearing stories about the creation of the Smudge Pot from San Dimas High teachers who were present when the game started in 1972.

"As a history teacher I was fascinated by the rivalry. As we approached the 50-year anniversary, I thought it would be a great way to honor the game and a perfect end-of-the-year project for my seniors," McGarvey said. "My Class of 2022 kids began the project last year and the work has extended over the summer and into this school year with my Class of 2023 seniors."

Among the highlights of the website are a reprinting of the original principals' messages heralding the beginning of a new Bonita Unified tradition, taken from the original game programs, and a capsule biography of former Bonita High star athlete Glenn Davis, who went on to fame as a collegiate star for Army in the 1940s. "Mr. Outside," as Davis was known, was a Heisman trophy winner for Army in 1946, and went on to play professionally for the Los Angeles Rams.

Bonita High Class of 2022 graduate Mary Kors served as a project manager and copy editor for the website, scouring yearbooks, old newspapers and the internet for game accounts. Kors also helped design the web page. Working on the website helped Kors expand her skill set as she took the lead in a school project. Kors loved the work so much she volunteered to continue working on it after she graduated.

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“At first, I was a little nervous because I had never created a website before, but I was the group leader and it was my responsibility to get everyone to work together. It was a good experience for me,” Kors said. “The more I worked on it, the more confident I grew. At the end of the year, I was very proud of the work we did, so I decided to help out during the summer.”

Kors admits getting a rush of adrenaline watching the game and applauds the optimism and spirit demonstrated by the players and the fans. For Bonita High seniors Emile Stubbs and Leela Kakanar, who are acting as the website’s social media managers for the 2022-23 school year, the Smudge Pot is much more than hype: it is an event that rallies the community.

“I honestly find it cool to see how hyped up everyone gets for the game,” Kakanar said. “Many students don’t really show much school spirit until it comes to this game, and even family members and college scouts and so many people fill the stadium every year to see the outcome because the rivalry runs so high and goes so far back. It’s fun to create a living history that both schools can be proud of.”

Stubbs and Kakanar schedule social media posts three times a week, one each for Bonita, San Dimas and the District office. The posts highlight a player or game and add historical perspective based on media or yearbook accounts of the game. McGarvey oversees all of the social media postings and articles written for the website, to ensure that each story is balanced and free from bias.

The website is located at www.smudgepotgame.com. The 50th game in the rivalry takes place at 7 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 10 at Citrus College Stadium.

PHOTO:

BUSD_SMUDGEPOT_WEBSITE: Bonita High School students have created a website honoring the 50-year history of the District’s Smudge Pot football rivalry as part of their senior year Purpose-Driven, Active, Career Exploration (PACE) project.

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