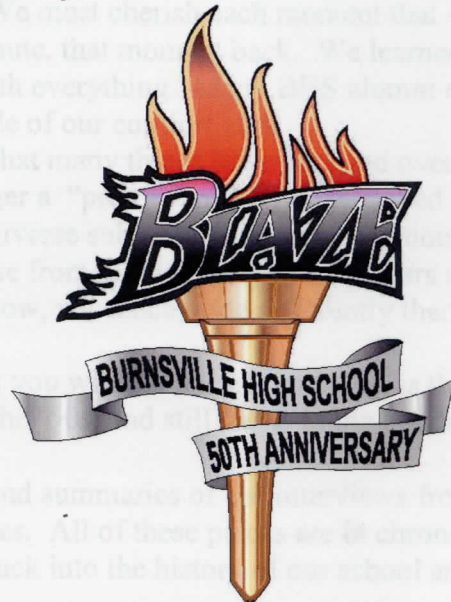


May 31, 2006

Dear BHHS Alumni:

Burnsville Senior High School

A 50th Anniversary Oral History Project



Sincerely,

Suey Lind, Class of 1977

and the American History Club

1957-2006

May 31, 2006

Dear BHS Alumni,

This book was created by three American History classes as a project. A lot of time, thought and heart flowed through us into this publication. About 100 students interviewed fifty alumni from the year 1958 to the present. We conducted a face to face interview, during which we asked questions about BHS. We inquired about their personal experiences, current events from that time and their profound thoughts after high school. We interviewed all types of people, ranging from a CEO of a local web technology company, a district judge, a world-class explorer, teachers, policemen, doctors, nurses, homemakers, local business people and some who have gone into the military.

We met with these fine people at various places such as Caribou and Dairy Queen, and through the interview we gained insight into what their lives were like in high school compared to ours. We learned that their lives, in some ways, were not so different from ours. Sports are still a big part of our school and society, as it was back then. Homecoming and Prom are still around and are the main social events of the season.

Much of what we heard from the alumni was an expression of deep admiration for the value of life and learning. We learned that enjoying and cherishing life is still the greatest gift. We, as students, need to try to take advice in and really try to understand when people who are older and wiser speak to us. We must cherish each moment that we are given, because we will never get that second, that minute, that moment back. We learned that we should be as creative and explorative as possible with everything. Many BHS alumni expressed that we should try new things, and explore outside of our comfort zone.

We have also learned that many things have changed over the past fifty years. For example, Burnsville is no longer a "pretty vanilla" (as described by alumnus Jim Campbell) suburb. It is one of the most diverse suburbs, and *that* distinction we love. Girls now have a huge variety of sports to choose from, unlike thirty to fifty years ago when we only had cheerleading. At our dances now, we dance quite differently than in the sixties when they did the Twist and Mashed Potato.

One thing, though, that you will see has not changed, is the dedication to academics and school spirit that was born in the '50s, and still *burns* in the hearts of BHS students who are the *Blaze*.

In this book you will find summaries of our interviews from the fifty different pairs of students, including direct quotes. All of these pieces are in chronological order. We hope that you will enjoy these glances back into the history of our school and our world.

Sincerely,

Suzy Juul, Class of 2007
and the American History Classes of Mrs. Aars

A Note From The Teacher

This project began as an idea of mine to try to turn my three junior-level American History classes this semester into authentic historians by documenting the 50 years of Burnsville Senior High School. This initial idea turned into an oral history project for about 100 students with four main components: the interview by a student or pair of students of one alumna(us) from an assigned year, a written summary of the interview, an oral and visual presentation of the interview, and then selected topics, quotes, and photos being placed on a final display board, which would go on display at the August 25, 2006, 50th Anniversary Open House.

In each segment of the project, there were hurdles that we met. First, the “reader” of this oral history project must realize that ALL students in my three classes completed an interview and written summary. So the reader must understand that the level of competency in completing the project might vary. Some students conducted very thorough interviews, asking the right questions and writing a detailed summary. Other students clearly rushed through the interview and wrote only a brief summary. In addition, I had wanted this project to be as student-centered as possible—this is, in fact, their school—so I gave a great deal of autonomy to the students to choose the questions they’d ask, to whittle their interviews down into a single-spaced page or two of information, etc. In retrospect, I may have mandated a few more requirements if I were to do this again. But I am also pleased with the variety of things the students have documented about the school, based on their interests; many of them tapped into anecdotes that may not have emerged if following a more rigid format.

Another obstacle we faced during the interviews was the source itself, which turned into a great opportunity for my students to find the inherent problems in documenting history accurately. Students realized their sources were sometimes careful with their words, especially when a recording device was on. They also noted that sometimes sources could not always remember details about a particular instance—especially when going back 50 years ago. Perhaps the right questions were not always asked to provoke the memories, but certainly some history is lost the further we move away from a situation. The other interesting thing we found during the interviews was how differently two people could view a similar teacher, event, or topic. During the ‘70s, for instance, several people commented on how much more well-behaved students are today than they were at that time. But then other interviewees commented on how ideal and perfect things were in the ‘70s, and how chaotic they believed things were today. Clearly, other circumstances shape our views of past events.

We realize this project, while helpful in documenting the school’s history, is not perfect. Ideally, we would have interviewed at least five percent or more of the graduates from each year. We heard from three of the 14 graduates of 1958 (almost 25%), but in all the other years, we interviewed generally only one graduate. In 1980, interviewing one graduate out of 880 students clearly does not give a well-rounded view of that year’s history. We also deliberately avoided interviewing only the class officers or best athletes. To give a true picture of the school, I believed we needed to interview all types of people—those who were involved and successful at BHS along with those who were not. That said, those who weren’t involved in the high school often had less information to give about its programs and activities during a certain year.

Despite the inherent flaws within this project, I am happy with the final products. The enclosed summaries that you’ll read from each year are fascinating to read and give a well-rounded look at some of the memorable moments from this high school’s history. The display boards show the moments and memories that were referred to multiple times during our interviews. And my students learned a great deal from this process. One of the biggest things students said they gained from this project was the knowledge that in order to preserve true history, we must be more vigilant in documenting it. And they claimed to feel a greater kinship to Burnsville Senior High School after the interviews—feeling more embedded in its identity. Perhaps it’s a lesson we all need to be reminded of—to seize the opportunity to talk to those who came before us in order to preserve our own history and identities. I hope you’ll enjoy our attempt to do just that.

Sincerely,



Kristina Jorgenson Aars

BHS History Teacher, 2000-Present

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To The Alumni Who Were Interviewed (names noted on following pages)

Thank you for making this project possible by graciously agreeing to be interviewed by a person who had previously been unknown to you. Most of you were contacted without any advance warning, and you made time in your busy schedules to be interviewed for a project about which you knew little. The students, time and again, commented on how friendly and flexible you were, in terms of meeting them and speaking with them. I tried to prepare my students beforehand to set the appointments early, to be on time for the interviews, to ask follow-up questions to probe topics, but I'm certain that those suggestions were not always followed. And yet, you all gave valuable information that we've been able to use to document BHS history.

While the summaries enclosed have been edited at least three times, I would suspect some spelling and grammar errors yet exist. I apologize for that. I also apologize for any misrepresentations of your interviews. Since I asked the students to summarize the interviews, rather than type the interviews verbatim, you'll find they sometimes gave their own interpretations of your words. While they had to include direct quotes in their summaries, I know that in some cases, your words were probably interpreted in a different way than you had anticipated. We know that's one of the major flaws of a secondhand historical source, and we tried to avoid skewing the interviews in any way, but to avoid any misrepresentation is nearly impossible.

To The Students In My Classes (names noted on following pages)

Thank you for doing such a spectacular job on this project. You worked hard the entire month we spent on this --even maintaining your focus in the last weeks of school. I hope you'll remember your experience as an historian when you return for your 50th reunion in 2057. I certainly will remember it as a highlight of my career.

Special thanks to the following students, members of the Oral History Project Core Leadership Team, who came in before and after school to help put this project together:

Written Tasks: Mark Bader, Patrick Duffy, Suzy Juul, Melanie Teachout

Display Boards (these students came in during SUMMER VACATION): Judy Eckman, Sara James, Robbie Jones, Suzy Juul, Kelsey King, Jayne Knaeble, Afua Manuh, Lori Marko, Becky McCarthy, Joe Sherin, Cate Stalock, Tyler Strickland

Photo Printing: Victoria Kononov, Tyler Strickland and his dad, Jamie Strickland

Brainstorming/Other: All the students above and Erica Andreason, Melissa Larson, Jenny Moe, Alan Riveros, Nathan Amos, Alex Christianson, Phil Solyntjes, Elliot Post, Kyle Pederson, Courtney Stieg, Becca Young, Kelsey W., Tom Boucher, Kelly Culhane, Molly Himsel, Cliff Johnson, Rachel Peterson, and Nasteha Yassin

To The Faculty and Community Members Who Helped With This Project

Principal Kay Joyce, thank you for directing me to the right people and resources that could help with this project.

Nancy Huddleston, editor of the Savage Pacer, thank you for meeting with me, for giving me many valuable resources, for alerting the media to the event, and for serving as the liaison with the 50th Anniversary group.

Class of '58 alumni Nancy Oster Allen, Will Williams, and Janet Bohn Williams, thank you for "kicking off" the oral history project by speaking with my students on May 9. They enjoyed hearing your stories.

To the following BHS faculty, thank you for alerting me to certain key alumni to interview: Bruce Anderson, Penny Damlo, Nancy Hartman, Mary Lenhardt, Liz Lund, Jeff Marshall, Dave McDevitt, and Mark Riggs

Grad Yr	STUDENT INTERVIEWER(S)	ALUMNI INTERVIEWED
1957		Could not reach any of the three graduates from this year.
1958	Tyler Strickland & Trent Bousu	Nancy Oster Allen
1959	Robbie Jones & Becky McCarthy	Bob Lattery
1960	Holly Anderson & Lori Marko	Connie Emerson Thoma
1961	Greta Stroh & Kelly Gluth	Sandra Denzer Grundstrom
1962	Erica Andreasen & Bailey Vikstrom	Carlene Widmer McDowell
1963	Suzy Juul & Heather Rogers	Jim Campbell
1964	Melissa Larson & Rose Sauve	Jane Helgesen
1965	Jenny Moe & Carter Sackett	Nancy Boche Westphal
1966	Mark Bader & Josh Threlkeld	Robert (Bruce) Cody
1967	Nathan Amos & Alan Riveros	Tom Miller
1968	Melanie Teachout & Sammy Wyman	Susan Hill
1969	Kevin Anderson & Alex Christianson	Patricia Rande Rude
1970	Michael Woodward	Kenneth Storm Jr.
1971	Elliot Post & Phil Solyntjes	Thomas Kennealy
1972	Ismahan Abdi	Jean Lervoog Braun
1973	Kyle Peterson & Joe Sherin	Greg Wendorf
1974	Krista Burns & Patrick Duffy	Joel Ronning
1975	Brett Allen & Nick Brown	Debbie Boberg Grieve
1976	Tyler Dahlk & Eddy Hampe	Patty Oaster Mraz
1977	Steve Casperson & Zach Wygant	Craig Clausnitzer
1978	Jayne Knaeble & Cate Stalock	David Knutson
1979	Kelsey King & Victoria Kononov	Diane Huberty
1980	Courtney Stieg & Becca Young	Renee Wilkie Boger
1981	Mary Gelhar	David Dierfeldt
1982	Kelsey Edwards & Kelsey W.	Melanie Nelson Davidson; Mark VanderWoude

Grad Yr	STUDENT INTERVIEWER(S)	ALUMNI INTERVIEWED
1983	Tom Boucher	Tom Robison
1984	Kelly Culhane & Molly Himsel	Mark Hilborn
1985	Andrew Berg & Casey Koppes	Angela Heid Preston
1986	Ashley Brintnall & Sara James	Karen Komar
1987	Chase Laffrenzen & Kyle Marquardt	Jennifer Mazanec Graff
1988	Kyle Bjoin	Michael Heidemann
1989	Cliff Johnson & Jack Snyder	Dana Appleby Sahlin
1990	Jon Palmer & Nick Skalko	Bruce Hennen
1991	Jon Palmer & Nick Skalko	Stephanie Lillie Hennen
1992	Denys Artasevich & Johnny Phommavongsa	Steven Orth
1993	Duy Tran & Tim Weiland	Elizabeth (Betsy) Paulson Miller
1994	Michelle Baillet & Rachel Peterson	Jennifer Marshall
1995	Matt Chacos & Andy Rovder	Danny Kurtz
1996	Krista Burns	Jon Burns
1997	Alyssa Reinarz	Matthew Johnson
1998	Brian Gauger & Alex Nutting	Chris Hetland
1999	Jake Bean & Clint Livingston	Dan Moore
2000	Judy Eckman & Afua Manuh	Tia Tilbury
2001	Amelia Cooper & Marissa Hodges	Michael Baillet
2002	Dustin Fothergill & Matt Slabodnik	Brandon Nesbitt
2003	Colt Clark	Jillian McCool
2004	Nasteha Yassin	Muno Elmi
2005	Dan Trabant	Danny Grimm
2006	Samsam Yusuf	Nasra Omar