

News from the Grant High School Alumni Association

February, 2008

U. S. Grant High School Alumni Association

P. O. Box 13291, Portland, Oregon 97213

Association Update

Please note that we have a new address for our mail – P. O. Box 13291, Portland, Oregon 97213. Previously our mail was delivered to the school, adding unnecessary work for the office staff and making it difficult to retrieve our mail whenever we needed it.

In January we elected officers for the year. Rodger Eddy continues as President, John Leonard is Vice President, Karyl Whelan is Secretary, and Christi Knutson is our Treasurer. We also began a Scholarship Fund with a donation of \$100. With additional donations we may be able to offer a scholarship this year. All donations are welcome and can be sent to our new address.

In this issue we have articles about retired Grant Latin teacher Pamela Brown and about a special Grant-related New Year's Eve with the band Pink Martini, along with a fall sports review and information on upcoming events.

Pamela Brown Retires after 38 Years of Teaching Latin

Students at Grant in 1968 knew her as Miss Raschio; later students would know her as Mrs. Brown. Under either name, Pamela Raschio Brown has been the linchpin of Grant's Latin program for 38 years, retiring first in 1999, but after being asked to continue on for a few years, retired finally at the end of the 2006-07 school year. As Latin has been phased out of most American high schools, Grant has been able to maintain Latin as a foreign language option largely due to Mrs. Brown.

In an interview, Mrs. Brown spoke about her beginnings at Grant. She first came to Grant as a Reed College Master of Teaching intern, but when her master teacher, Doris Hanlon, was diagnosed with stomach cancer, she took on a full teaching load. "I taught my classes, which were first and second year classes, and then I took her (Mrs. Hanlon's) third and fourth year classes in the afternoon and went to Reed at night and did my coursework. I don't know how I survived the year!"



Pamela Raschio Brown in 1968-69

Mrs. Brown recalls being "tested" by her students that first year. Teaching a lesson on Caesar, she pulled down the map to show the three divisions of Gaul and found that the senior boys had attached a large picture of Miss January from Playboy Magazine. The students "were awaiting with bated breath," she said. "And I just went blithely on giving

the geography lesson over the body of Miss January. I did not miss a beat. I knew that was the test, and I knew if I failed it, it would be all over. So I guess I passed."

Kate Davenport ('72) began attending Grant the same year that Mrs. Brown began teaching. She remembers originally wanting to take Latin because until recently it had been the language of the Catholic Church, but then Mrs. Brown's class made her realize how much could be learned about English and about language itself from the class. "So many English words have Latin origins," Kate noted, and having that knowledge is basic in a good education today as well as when she was in high school.

Part of the credit for keeping Latin alive at Grant has to go to the Greco-Roman Civilization course that Mrs. Brown wrote in the early 1970s and which she taught for 27 years. She found it a challenging course to teach, but one that she loved. It was also a way to supplement her Latin classes. Students who enjoyed the culture and civilization class often chose to try Latin.

The Greco-Roman Civilization class was an interdisciplinary humanities class that fit into no particular academic category, and so was placed in the English department. As a result, because she was not endorsed to teach English, Mrs. Brown was required to sign a document every year stating that she was misassigned and teaching outside her area of expertise. To rectify the problem, she went to Portland State to pursue an English endorsement. Mrs. Brown recalled discussing her transcript with them. "I said, I think I already have a number of courses already completed, for example, the Greek tragedy course that you require. And they said, 'Yes, but you read the Greek tragedy in Greek, not in English, so we can't give you credit for it.' " Frustrated, she went back to signing the "misassigned" statement each year. "I

taught Greco-Roman Civ., two or three sections of it, for 27 years misassigned and outside of my area of expertise, and I don't know how I survived," she noted sarcastically.

Surviving 38 years as a teacher, all of them at Grant, has been a rewarding experience for Mrs. Brown. "My career has been at Grant," she said, "and I live in the neighborhood here as well. I've been pretty loyal to the school, because I think that Grant is the best school in the system. I've always said so, and I've had lots of offers from Lincoln. Time after time Lincoln tried to lure me away, but I never wanted to leave this neighborhood. There's a feeling in this neighborhood that's quite wonderful, and it reminded me a lot of the neighborhood that I grew up in, Eastmoreland. It's a very strong neighborhood feeling, a lot of commitment to the schools, and kids coming back again after they get married [to] raise their own families in the neighborhood."

But above all, Mrs. Brown credits her students for keeping her at the school. "They are the most interesting people in the world. And they're very trusting, and they're very open, they're very honest. I love that. They do not play games, and so I love talking to them. I love exchanging ideas with them. I have loved every minute of my teaching and being with my students. They're the reason I come here."

A Shrinking Latin Program at Grant

When Grant first opened in 1924 it had four Latin teachers on staff, and by January had hired a fifth. When Mrs. Brown came to Grant in 1968 as an intern, the school had two Latin teachers, Doris Hanlon and Ila Comstock. Today there is just one class of first and second year students, taught by Anne Williamson.

What's Happening at Grant High School

Event information is from the Grant High School calendar. Times and places may change, so it is always wise to check with the school.

The GHS website is going through some changes, so some things may not be accessible at times. You can check the website by going to <http://grant.pps.k12.or.us/proto>.

News from *The Grantonian* can be viewed at www.grantonian.com.

Grant Sports

To find out where and when games and meets will take place go to:

www.pilathletics.com/schedulereults.asp.

Grant Performing Arts

Jan. 31-Feb. 2 and Feb. 7-9 – *Lysistrata*, Grant Auditorium, 7:00 pm, \$8

Mar. 6 – Early Spring Instrumental Concert, Grant Auditorium, 7:00 pm

Apr. 24-26 and May 1-3 – Spring Musical: *Beauty and the Beast* (call for times)

May 15 – Spring Vocal Concert, Grant Auditorium, 7:30 pm

May 20 – Instrumental Concert, Grant Auditorium, 7:00

Other Events

February 15 – “Sweet Sound of Jazz” is Grant Band’s biggest and yummiest fund raiser of the year. We rent a room, put out dozens of desserts and let the jazz bands play their hearts out. Westminster Presbyterian Church, 7-9 pm.

March 11 – Rose Festival Princess selection.

The GHS Alumni Association board usually meets on first Tuesdays. All are welcome. For details, call 503-281-9994 or email to Grantalumni@aol.com.

Every Tuesday night is “Grant High School Reunion Night”
at Mark Lindsay’s Rock & Roll Café
N. E. 42nd & Sandy

Mention that you are associated with Grant HS and you get 10% off the price of your meal.

In addition, the Rock & Roll Café will donate 50% of its profit
all day every Tuesday to Grant High School music programs.

The Grant High School Alumni Association

The Grant High School Alumni Association, founded in 2005 is an Oregon non-profit corporation with IRS 501©(3) status, making dues and contributions tax deductible. Our mission is to serve our graduates and to develop alumni interest and support for Grant. Grant High School continues to be an outstanding Portland school. We want to help continue this tradition.

The Alumni Association operates entirely on membership dues and donations. Our major goals and activities include:

- Providing opportunities for alumni to keep up with other Grant graduates and with current events at the school. A newsletter publicizing class reunions and all-alumni activities, current events at Grant, and historical highlights will be sent to members.
- Donating to GHS. We want to provide scholarships, to help with facility improvements and student programs, and to organize alumni service projects at the school.
- Developing and maintaining Grant's history collection. We are interviewing former students and faculty, and we plan to preserve 82 years of school newspapers and other historical documents on CD. We are also looking for donations of scrapbooks and other Grant memorabilia.
- Constructing and maintaining an address list of Grant graduates in order to help with class reunions and other alumni functions.
- Providing telephone and email contacts for alumni: call 503-281-9994 or email to Grantalumni@aol.com.

Please join us in helping to maintain Grant's proud tradition. Fill in the information below and send it in. Become part of the "Grant Experience." Thank you.

Membership and Contributions

The U. S. Grant High School of Portland, Oregon, Alumni Association is an Oregon non-profit corporation with IRS 501©(3) status, making dues and contributions tax deductible.

Name (present) _____

Name at Grant _____ Class _____

Address _____

City _____ State/Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Enclosed is:

- ☐ My \$20 annual dues
- ☐ My donation to the Grant Alumni Association Scholarship Fund
- ☐ Other donation in the amount of _____

Mail to: U. S. Grant Alumni Association. P. O. Box 13291. Portland, Oregon 97213

New Year's in Portland with Thomas Lauderdale ('88) and Pink Martini

Twenty four Grant High School singers were handed a remarkable opportunity when Thomas Lauderdale, founder of the band Pink Martini, called Grant choir director Doree Jarboe last November from London to ask if the Royal Blues could sing at the band's New Year's Eve performance in Portland. A 1988 Grant High School graduate and former student body president, Thomas Lauderdale started the band as a fundraiser for progressive political causes, beginning with four band members. It has since grown to twelve, including singer China Forbes, whom Thomas met at Harvard University. Today the Portland-based band performs its eclectic mix of music with an international flavor all over the world.

A classically trained pianist, Thomas Lauderdale won the Oregon Symphony's Corbett Competition for young musicians when he was 15. When Mrs. Jarboe began teaching at Grant, he was the vocal department accompanist.

After working with him in rehearsal, Royal Blues baritone Chris Kopet marveled at Lauderdale's talent. "He's an amazing pianist. Even when he's never seen the music before, he plays as if he's practiced for hours."

Also appearing with the band New Year's Eve was actress and former Portlander Jane Powell, who would have attended Grant High School had she not received a studio contract in Hollywood before her freshman year. She sang a duet with Pink Martini vocalist China Forbes and narrated "Peter and the Wolf," a Pink Martini version of the Prokofiev piece. The Royal Blues joined her in "Peter and the Wolf." They also backed up the song "Dosvedanya Mio Bombino" from Pink Martini's latest CD, "Hey, Eugene," sang the chorus to "La Vergine degli Angeli" from Verdi's opera *La Forza del Destino* with China Forbes singing the solo, and performed a vocal version of the William Tell Overture.

Grant Alumni Association Presentation to Jane Powell

In her autobiography, *The Girl Next Door*, Jane Powell remembers one big downside of getting an MGM contract as a young teenager – she wouldn't be able to go to Grant High School. So Grant Principal Toni Hunter and Thomas Lauderdale arranged for Grant Alumni Association President Rodger Eddy to present Jane Powell with an honorary Grant High School diploma at Pink Martini's 7:30 New Year's Eve performance.

Rodger remembers when Jane was Suzanne Burce who lived around the corner from him on Mallory and who used to babysit his little brother. He also remembers hearing her on the radio, singing and dancing (yes, dancing on the radio). She attended Fernwood for most of her elementary school years, but moved to Beaumont for the eighth grade. After she was chosen to be the Singing Victory Girl in the effort to sell war bonds during World War II, her parents took her to Hollywood where the studio contract offer changed her life.

Presenting her with the diploma, Rodger reminded her of the day, when the war was over, that she returned to visit Grant High School and her girl friends Shirley Bender and Evelyn Noble, Beaumont boyfriend Bill Macomber, and Fernwood boyfriend Buddy Leonard. After 60 years, like her friends, Jane Powell is now an alumna. (Unfortunately, it was impossible to get a photograph of this event.)

Review of Fall Sports at Grant

Football – Although the time and venue of the Grant-Lincoln football game changed abruptly when the Lincoln High School bleachers were condemned, it did not prevent the Generals from defeating Lincoln 42-14 to take the PIL Championship. After post-season wins over Redmond and Central Catholic, Grant was defeated in the semifinals by Sheldon, the eventual 6A State Champion.

Volleyball – Grant's volleyball team worked hard to improve their game over the season, finishing 6-7 overall.

Soccer – The boys were PIL champions. With an 11-2 overall record, they defeated Southridge, McMinnville, and Westview in the post-season, reaching the state finals, where they lost to Central Catholic, 1-0. The girls were second in PIL play and went to playoffs, but lost 1-0 to Oregon City.

Cross Country – The girls overall depth was good this year. They placed 2nd in the PIL and went to the state meet. The boys were 1st in the PIL and 3rd at the state meet, and they came in 10th at the Nike Team National northwest regional qualifier held in Boise, Idaho.

Winter Concert Welcomes Old Friends

Former Grant students attend the Winter Concert each year to see old friends and teachers. This year former Grant theater teacher Bruce McDonald also attended and accompanied the Royal Blues and Royal Blue alumni on the piano for "I Am But a Small Voice." Thomas Lauderdale, class of 1988, was there to accompany the choirs and audience in the "Hallelujah Chorus." For those who remember the year that Thomas returned to accompany the choirs wearing a pink cocktail dress, we note that he was conservatively dressed in a suit this time.

In the News

Oregonian writer Renee Mitchell wrote about Grant High School's theater program and its winter play, *Lysistrata*, in her January 24 column. About women withholding their affections from men until they stop fighting wars, *Lysistrata* has been scheduled to open January 31 with performances over the first two weekends in February. For her column, Mitchell spoke to 2007 Grant graduate Ian Adams-Dirk, now a freshman at OSU. Ian travelled with other Grant students to Scotland last August, where they performed theater teacher Chris Lane's musical drama *Rhino Provino* at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. In the column he describes the value of his theater opportunity at Grant as "a life-changing experience."

Grant graduate Beverly Bunn Cleary ('33) was featured in an *Oregonian* article, "The Muse of Klickitat Street" by staff writer Katy Muldoon. Although she has not lived in Oregon since leaving Grant, her well-known children's books have been set in the northeast Portland neighborhood where she spent most of her childhood, beginning with first grade at Fernwood Elementary School. In 1950 she wrote her first children's book, *Henry Huggins*. Since then, Cleary's books have sold more than 90 million copies, and not one title has ever been out of print. Almost 92, she now lives in a retirement community in Carmel, California. She no longer writes, but children are still reading her books.