



BENSON TECH

ALUMNI TEXT

Benson Tech Modernization

Page 2

Benson Tech Boosters

Page 3

Reunion Information

Page 6

The Official Newsletter of the Benson Polytechnic High School Alumni Association (BPHSAA), May 2021 Edition

Scholarship Committee reestablished

A formal committee was formed in March to focus greater attention on the Benson Polytechnic High School Alumni Scholarship Fund. While the money itself is managed by the Oregon Community Foundation (OCF), raising funds for the scholarship has been one of the BPHSAA's primary objectives since the Alumni Association's founding. The members of this newly (re-)instated committee are: Dale Bajema, Kevin Clark, Roger Edwards, Rachael Lizio Katzen Kuryunny, and Josh Piper.

The Scholarship Committee's first initiative was to draft and mail personal thank you letters (amplifying those sent by OCF) to express gratitude to recent donors. From here on out, donors will be recognized in Association Newsletters as well as on the Association's webpage.

The more than 75 scholarships awarded to date represent one of the primary ways in which the BPHSAA provides concrete support to Benson Tech students yet, up until now, members of the Alumni Association have not played an active role in the selection of scholarship recipients. This spring, Committee member Rachael LK Kuryunny will work with Benson faculty and staff to assess student applications and determine the eventual scholar-

(continued on Page 5)



Above: Benson Tech students line up in front of the school to enter the building on April 19 for their first day of in-classroom instruction since the COVID-19 pandemic began last March. Students have the option to finish the 2020-2021 school year with a hybrid schedule that returns them to the classroom two days a week. (Photo courtesy of Curtis Salgado/AP Images for Portland Public Schools)

It's back to school for some Benson Tech students

For the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic began in March 2020, Benson Tech opened for some instruction on April 19, 2021. Shortly prior to that date, students were able to choose to return to the classroom part time or to finish the school with Comprehensive Distance Learning (CDL) as they had been. Of Benson Tech's current 900+ students, approximately 400 opted for the hybrid of some time in the classroom and some time with CDL.

With CDL or "asynchronous learning" students use their computers to log into a virtual space to interact with their teachers and other students for a set schedule of classes on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. On Wednesday, the students have time to independently access certain learning materials. Completed assignments are then due on specified dates.

For those 400 who have opted for some classroom instruction (and limited face-to-face interaction with teachers and classmates), they are at Benson for 2.5 hours on two days a week. One half of the 400 or "Cohort A" attend in-school classes Monday and Tuesday afternoon and "Cohort B" Thursday and Friday afternoon. The rest of the week, with this hybrid arrangement, their schedule is the same CDL schedule.

The other change from past school years is that instead of eight classes every day through the full school year there are only four. What would have



Above: Design visualization from October 2020 of planned renovations for Benson Tech's front entry from an aerial view. (Image courtesy of Bassetti Architects)

Benson modernization to enter next phase

As the 2020-21 school year winds down, Benson Tech is about to enter the next phase of its modernization. Some of the school's equipment, materials and other learning items have been packed in the past two-four months and the remainder will be packed as soon as school ends on June 11. During July and August, those items needed for Benson Tech's three-year sojourn at the former Marshall High School campus in SE Portland will be moved and set up there. Any items not needed at Marshall will either be safely stored or discarded. Actual modernization of the "historic" Benson Tech building will begin this fall.

Final design work and permitting continues. Drawings have been submitted to the City of Portland for permits. A sign-off has been received from the Historic Landmarks Commission. Bassetti Architects continues working with the selected construction company Anderson Construction to have the final construction documents before actual construction begins.

Since last fall, decisions have been on the thousands of pieces of Benson Tech's existing CTE equipment and tool. Some of the to-be-stored pieces have already been moved with others packed. Hundreds of unneeded items have been donated, sold or scrapped (or about to be) with any resulting money going to Benson Tech and/or Portland Public Schools (PPS). The items still in use as school ends

will be hurriedly packed for Marshall or storage. By the end of June, the school building must be emptied.

While Marshall High School has a certain amount of existing CTE space, a new building is being erected for Benson Tech's automotive and construction programs. A contract has been awarded and construction is underway for this Marshall CTE Annex. Construction will be complete in August for the start of school.

An official groundbreaking for the Benson Tech modernization is scheduled for Saturday August 7. Because of evolving COVID-19 restrictions, no details regarding the event are available at this time. As details are known, they will be posted on the BPHSAA's webpage.

The next major phase (so to speak) of Benson Tech's modernization begins around Labor Day 2021. In one part of Portland, Benson Tech will have begun school on September 1, 2021— and settling into three years of instruction at Marshall High School. In another part of town, Anderson Construction will have its construction office set up on historic Benson Tech building grounds and started work. It is expected that before the end of 2021, parts of the building to be completely replaced during the modernization will have been demolished. For the latest updates regarding the renovation, visit the [Benson HS Modernization page](#) on the PPS website.

Benson Tech Ocean Bowl success

Benson Tech beat Lake Oswego High School in this year's (virtual) February Regional Finals of the Ocean Bowl. Benson Tech is now competing with 21 other teams for the National Title being held virtually later in May. The National Ocean Science Bowl academic competition is held annually to promote national interest and study of environment and earth science, especially ocean sciences, through team competition among the country's high schools.



After two rounds of competition in February, Benson Tech and Lake Oswego were tied. Benson Tech then went on to sweep the ice-breaker round 8 – 0. The BPHSAA send congratulations to seniors **Henry Senters**, **Gabriel Bliss**, **Tory Norton**, and **Alex Millican**, and freshman **Agatha Chang**, as well as Team Mentor **Kerry Zambrano**.

“Plunging into Our Polar Seas” is 2021's theme — incorporating everything from sea-ice dynamics and coastal processes to Arctic and Antarctica geology to the impacts sea ice changes and variability have on the ecosystem to ocean observation capabilities and challenges to policy related to polar regions.

As this newsletter “goes to press” Benson Tech's team is preparing (and already playing) in the May 7-17 Finals. (Please go to bensontechalumni.org for an account of how Benson Tech did.)

Date set in 2022 for 100th Tech Show

The next Benson Tech Show will be held April 21 and 22, 2022, and will be the 100th. It will be held at the former Marshall High School campus, where Benson Tech will be holding classes for three years during the modernization of its own campus. Celebration of the 100th was originally set for 2020, but canceled (and again in 2021) due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As at previous Tech Shows, the BPHSAA will be hosting a special area for returning alumni with some special features for the event. We welcome both your ideas on how to commemorate the 100th Tech Show and as your help in planning for it!

Spring news from Benson Tech Boosters

By Benson Tech Boosters Lisa Yanase, Director; Amber Johnson, Community Liaison; and Elizabeth O'Malley, School Liaison

We are excited to share that Benson Tech sports are back! After a much-too-long pause, it's been great to see student athletes and dedicated coaches return for fall and now spring sports. We are so proud of our teams. Benson Tech sports are like no other local Portland Public Schools (PPS) high schools, with students coming from all over Portland to participate.



Benson Tech Boosters has been working hard to support our teams and build community. From our fundraising kickoff in September 2019 to present (and despite the pandemic), we have raised and distributed \$4,500+ from events, concessions, tech gear and donations to help fund equipment, uniforms and travel fees for Benson Tech sports.

Unfortunately our ambitious plans for 2020 were cut short because of the pandemic. Benson Tech Boosters needs your help now to continue our support in 2021.

As we welcome the return of teams and prepare for a fall start at the former Marshall campus, the need for support has never been greater.

We ask that Benson Tech alumni join us in our important work. There are many ways you can help, such as:

- Individual donations, including linking your Fred Meyer Rewards (search for Benson TechBoosters by name or “AX717”)
- Corporate sponsorships – we are actively looking for corporate sponsors for fall 2021 sports. We will have many banner options at the Marshall campus). Email bensontechboosters.com for more information.
- In-kind support (we currently need web help to set up our online gear store)
- Link us to your Amazon Rewards – search for “Benson Tech Boosters”
- Show your school pride and shop for Benson Tech gear at bensontechboosters.org.
- Support the Benson Tech Boosters 2021 Spring Pledge Drive, which kicked off on May 1! Visit bensontechboosters.org to contribute.

We are grateful for the past and current support of the Benson Tech Alumni. Thank you for investing in today's student athletes and future alumni. Go Tech!

Back to school, continued from front cover



Top: Principal Curtis Wilson and Benson Tech teachers prepare to welcome students back for in-classroom instruction on April 19, the first time classes have been held in person since March 2020. **Bottom:** Attending shop class on April 19. (Photos courtesy of Curtis Salgado/ AP Images for Portland Public Schools).

been the first four classes of the day were given a double amount of time during first half of the year, so by January 2021 a year's worth of the class's content had been covered and the students had earning a year's credit for the classes. Now in the second half of the year, what would have been the other four classes of the day (5-8) are being taught, and by the end of school in June, a full year of instruction has been covered. A different approach to the school year, but an attempt to adapt to the difficulties some students are having learning largely independently at home.

Though the start of the 2021-22 school year is over three months away, and the COVID-19 pandemic is not over, Portland Public Schools (PPS) is cautiously preparing for in-the-classroom instruction this fall. At that time, Benson Tech will be at the former Marshall High School campus in SE Portland, its temporary home during the three-year modernization. But, as with so many things during the pandemic —“stay tuned.”

For those opting for the hybrid learning, the 400 were divided into Cohort A and Cohort B. Students in Cohort A attends in-school classes for 2.5 hours Monday and Tuesday afternoons; the Cohort B students Thursday and Friday afternoons. The rest of the school week, they continue the asynchronous CDL schedule – described below – that the rest of Benson Tech students are following.

The regular asynchronous schedule – that those who have not opted back into some classroom instruction and continuing CDL only are following – instruction will remain the same as it has been previously, i.e., there is online virtual (synchronously) in the mornings on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday . During those times, the student interact via a computer in a virtual space with their teachers and other classmates during set hours for each class. The rest of the school week — Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday afternoons and all day Wednesday — is devoted to asynchronous learning in which students have access to certain learning material and they independently study and complete assignments by defined dates.

Beginning last fall, in a further departure from the standard pre-COVID school day, PPS decided that instead of the regular eight classes per day, CDL would focus on the first four classes of the day, devoting double the time to the subject matter of those four classes, and thus completing a year's worth of instruction for those classes by January. Since then, regardless of whether students have now opted hybrid or CDL, the course work has been associated with the remaining four class periods. A different approach to the school year, but with the same results of a full year of credits for the eight classes.

Benson Tech 2021 Graduation

Benson Tech's 2021 graduation ceremonies will be held at 4:00 p.m. on June 7 at Providence Park. This outdoor setting was chosen by Portland Public Schools (PPS) to comply with Oregon's COVID-19 restrictions on group gatherings. While last year's "drive-through" 2020 graduation at Benson Tech was deemed a success, Providence Park will allow the entire class to gather as a group, as well as allowing some of their family and friends to attend with appropriate spacing.

The BPHSAA sends its congratulations to all of the 2021 graduates in advance ... and we welcome each of you into the ranks of the thousands who are proud to call Benson Tech their alma mater.

Techman's virtual learning experience during senior year

By Aberdeen Stuart (Class of 2021)

Editor's note: Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, we have asked several Benson Tech students to tell us about how the pandemic affected their high school experience. Aberdeen Stuart's story follows. As to be expected, other students were affected differently. See the September 2020 and January 2021 on our webpage for other stories.

The pandemic closures have affected everyone. Every group of people has to change their behavior to fit into the precautionary safety measures. Students are no exception. I'm Aberdeen Stuart, a senior here at Benson in the Building Construction program. This past year has still been beneficial. I somewhat regret my inability to get the single credit I needed to graduate over the summer and skip this whole mess entirely. A close friend of mine did that and graduated in the class of 2020. Where online school is still helpful is maintaining a schedule. I don't have to catch the bus, but I do have to log on to google meets or zoom.

Last spring I had more energy after the school day because I wasn't having so many social interactions as compared to in-person school. Now online class sucks energy out of me too. It's hard to be one of the only students speaking or having the camera on besides the teacher. In the school building there is so much more control. You can walk in and focus on school entirely. Not worry about siblings also in online video class eating up the bandwidth.

When I came to Benson I knew I wanted something different. Class beyond the required courses. I picked construction to focus in because I really liked the classroom environment and working on projects. The online classroom is not much different. We spin a wheel for a

turn to talk about our projects and what's going on in our lives. Working in the garage by myself is much harder than at the shop. I continue because it's what I have to do.

Mondays and Thursdays I have two online classes, both AP. Tuesdays and Fridays are my construction class. Each an hour and twenty minutes. On Wednesdays and afternoons are asych (asynchronous) time, the time for homework. We still use slideshows and worksheets, group work and presentations. Teachers move us from the main meet to breakout rooms to discuss and work often. At this point students are better at participating by unmuting or typing into the chat. We don't have to push our desks together to work now!

Yet still I am sticking with CDL. I have only a month left of my high school career. To me going back would be too shocking and I'll have to go online in the fall again anyways. I've had no prom, not been in a classroom, or know what my graduation is going to look like. Though the skills we the class of 2021 have been forced to learn will help us navigate the adult world we

enter. Our parents and teachers cannot help us here. Only we can help each other and ourselves. Forced suddenly into a new world amidst an ongoing pandemic, our experiences are unique, rivaled perhaps not even those classes of 1918! It seems dark and more dangerous now. Now I remember the excitement of stepping onto the steps of Benson Polytechnic high school four years ago as a freshman. That excitement has not disappeared but matured into hope for my college years and adult life. We just have to keep moving and focus on the future with hope.



Above: Aberdeen Stuart



This edition of the BPHSAA's newsletter, *Alumni Text*, is made possible by Dale Bajema, editor; Connie Mar, layout; and contributions and articles from Rachael Lizio Katzen Kuryunny, Jeff Strachan, Max Baker, Josh Piper, Aberdeen Stuart, and Dale Bajema.

FEED BACK WANTED

The BPHSAA wants its newsletter to keep Benson Tech alumni — whether you live in the Portland area or around the U.S. and the world — informed of its activities, what is happening at Benson Tech today, and might be in the future. With each edition of the *Alumni Text*, we aim to include a variety of articles, features and pictures to keep you in the loop.

Are we succeeding? What articles do you find the most interesting/informative? Which aren't? More pictures? Would you like the newsletter more often? Less?

Email your thoughts and/or suggestions to info@bensontechalumni.org.

Scholarship Committee, continued from front cover ship awardees.

In prior years, members of the Association's Board of Directors have been able to speak directly with alumni (at Tech Show, the August community picnic, class reunions, etc) about the importance of the Scholarship Fund; as with so many things, the pandemic has restricted options for donor education and solicitation. In light of current circumstances, the Committee has been exploring alternative, focused forms of outreach, such as asking classes to make a one-time contribution in celebration of milestone reunions, and encouraging individuals to consider including the Scholarship Fund in their estate plans. The Scholarship Committee is seeking—through these initiatives and others—to increase both the number of donors and the average amount contributed, with the goal of growing the fund and insuring it will continue to provide scholarships to graduates for decades to come.

The Committee meets approximately once per month (remotely, until further notice), and welcomes suggestions and participation.

Origins of Scholarship Committee

What we now know as the Benson Polytechnic High School Alumni Scholarship Fund began in 1991 as a gift from the Classes of 1939, 1940, and 1941.



Above: Benson Tech machine shop, 1939.

Following a joint reunion of those classes in 1991, the remaining reunion funds were invested (with guidance from Portland Public Schools) with the intention of establishing a fund to provide scholarships to graduating Benson Tech graduates. In its early days, this scholarship fund was called the Benson Polytechnic High School 50-year Reunion Award Fund. Shortly after forming the fund, the founders applied for and received 503 (c)3 designation, which allows individuals to make tax-exempt contributions.

For the next decade or so, an ad-hoc committee comprised of alumni from the 1940's and 1950's worked to solicit additional donations. They addressed thousands of envelopes by hand and hosted several alumni picnics at Blue Lake Park in an effort to grow the original endowment. More than a hundred checks were received in response to the committee's outreach, all of which were deposited into the fund which was, at that point, still managed by PPS.

The annual earnings on the investment were used to award several small scholarships each year to graduates, with the exact amount and number of recipients changing depending on the overall growth of the fund and yearly financial market conditions. The first two scholarships were \$250, and—by 2007—the fund was robust enough to provide two awards of \$2,2200 apiece.

When the current BPHSAA was formed in 2008, the ad-hoc committee decided to turn over the long-term management of the fund to the new BPHSAA. Not long after the fund was renamed The Benson Polytechnic High School Alumni Scholarship Fund, and the money transferred to the Oregon Community Foundation (OCF), an organization that manages a multiplicity of funds and programs for Oregon institutions. The OCF is now responsible for handling all donations, managing investment activities, and dispersing the scholarship money, thus eliminating the possibility of fiscal impropriety.

Since 2008, the fund's principal has continued to grow due both to the generous contributions of donors, and also from a return on the fund's investments. In recent years, recipients of the Benson Polytechnic High School Alumni Scholarship have been chosen by a committee comprised of school staff. This year, a representative of the BPHSAA will assist in selecting the two to four scholarship recipients.

To sum up, a generous gift from the Classes of '39, '40' and '41, combined with money donated by Benson Tech alumni in the years since, has truly created a gift that continues to give.

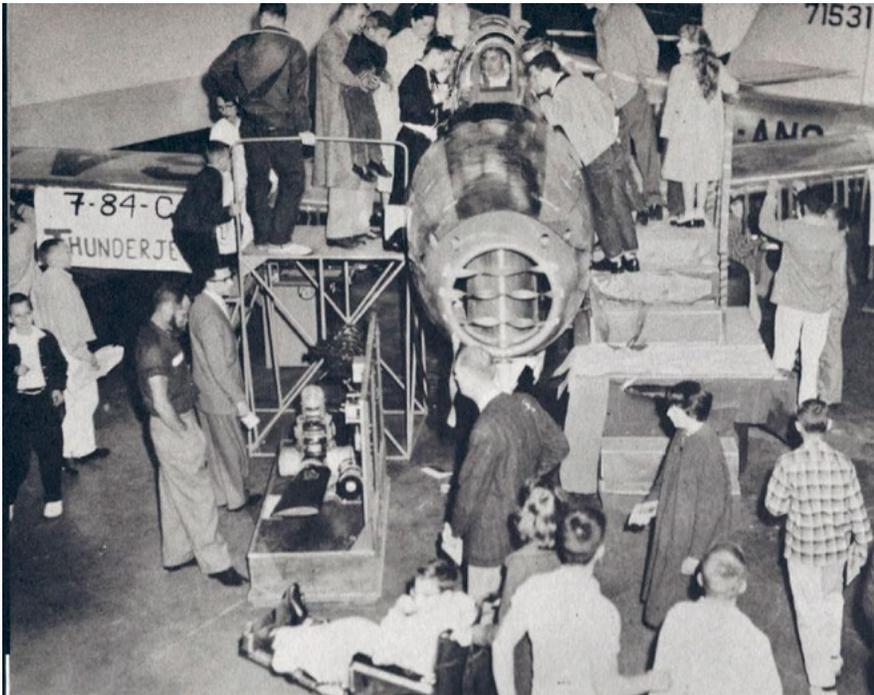
THANK YOU!



Recent Scholarship Fund Supporters

A special thank you to the following individuals and organizations for their contributions to the Benson Polytechnic High School Alumni Scholarship Fund in 2020 and 2021:

- Alan L. Batts
- Roger Edwards
- David Evans
- Rachael LK Kuryunny
- Gary Manchester & Nancy Zieg
- Joseph A. Perry
- Charles A. Tujo
- Robert L. Warnock
- The United Way of the Columbia-Willamette



Above: Aviation exhibition at Benson Tech, circa 1959.

The smallest of shops

By Jeff Strachan (Class of 1977)

Walking into the aviation shop in 2020, the school the morass of memories overwhelmed my senses. We were part of a team that walked through the shops to see what might be saved and what needed to be thrown away.

There was a hundred years worth of spare parts. Gyros, altimeters, magnetos, all ready to be disposed of, yet all, at one time, attached to active, flying airplanes. There was the 6-foot-tall radial engine that served decades of Tech Shows, seeming ready to spit, turn, rumble and roar one more time. A tiny simulator that allowed us to fly radials and practice radio calls sat in the corner. There were other aviation shop projects from the past. Most were being tossed into the dumpster.

I could not help but notice a new wall, bisecting the shop, effectively cutting the floor space in half from its 1973-1977 (my years) size.

This is likely a microcosm of the aviation industry, and possibly Benson Tech's Aviation shop. Almost 40 of my years have been spent in the thrall of aviation. With this industry growing, especially in the area of drones, the amount of flying personnel needed is shrinking. Pilots are now performing behind computer screens, not at 30,000 feet in the sky. There is an opportunity to make a state-of-the-art training area within Benson Tech High School for this emerging sector. With computer-based remote flying, the knowledge of developing hardware and software, along with troubleshooters for these systems, are invaluable. A three-year foundational training for these drone operators, combining curriculum for pilots and technicians, would be a step into producing for the student, a "pipeline" into a trade, for which Benson Tech is famous.

With just a small amount of ingenuity, the smallest shop might once again roar, hopefully soar.



REUNION INFORMATION

CLASS OF 1971 - 50th Reunion

Due to COVID, the Class of 1971's 50th reunion has been postponed until spring/summer 2022.

For questions, or to request re-union-related email updates, contact Gene Nelson at: Benson.Tech71@gmail.co. To connect with your old friends and get up-to-date details regarding reunion plans, join the Benson Tech '71 Facebook group at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Benson.Tech71/>

CLASS OF 1991 - 30th Reunion

(Class of 1990 welcome as well!_

WHAT : Adults-only gathering

WHEN : Saturday, August 21, 6:30pm

WHERE : McMenamin's Edgefield Distillery Bar (2126 SW Halsey St., Troutdale, OR)

RSVP & Questions: Contact Sharese (Williams) Jewel at reunion-BHS1991@gmail.com

Event announcement at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/285304718185521/permalink/3790826947633263>

Is your class planning a reunion, or did the pandemic force a planned event to be rescheduled?

If so, please contact info@bensontechalumni.com with the relevant details about your reunion, or any changes to the previously planned event, including:

- **WHAT** (the nature of the events—adults only, families welcome, etc.)
- **WHEN**
- **WHERE**
- **COST/HOW TO** purchase tickets
- **CONTACT INFO** for organizer(s)
- **EVENT WEBSITE/FACEBOOK PAGE** (if applicable)

We post announcements about upcoming reunions on the BPHSAA website (www.bensontechalumni.org) and in our newsletters.