

BENSON TECH ALUMNI TEXT



The Official Newsletter of the Benson Polytechnic High School Alumni Association
August 2012 Edition

Alumni Calendar of Events

Sat. Aug 25th..... PPS Project Community Care
Sep 2012..... Class of 2002 Reunion
Fall 2012..... Homecoming
Feb 2012..... Tech Show

Monthly Social Gathering at Kenton Station...
...Every 4th Tuesday of the Month

Benson Tech Foundation Formed

The 501c3 foundation is being formed to provide a simple tax-exempt means for Benson graduates and supporters to contribute to Benson High School's technical programs. The foundation to be known as the Benson Tech Foundation will channel money and *in-kind gifts* of equipment, tools, supplies and other services into Benson's shops and labs. Previously there has been the question as to whether all of any contribution was going to be available for those technical programs.

The foundation has been incorporated and is now seeking approval by the Internal Revenue Service as a tax exempt charitable organization. A webpage for the Foundation will soon be created. While the Benson Polytechnic High School Alumni Association is providing the upfront money to establish the foundation, it is expected that the Foundation will operate independently.

For more information about how to contribute later this fall and/or how to get involved in the Foundation's activities contact Dale Bajema (dalebajema@comcast.net) or Rob Johns (robjohns@comcast.net).

The Graduating Class of 2012

About 200 seniors graduated on June 4th in a ceremony at the Memorial Coliseum. Almost half of them received some sort of a scholarship or award for their work at school. Collectively they received over \$1.5 million in scholarships with one of them receiving one of the prestigious Bill and Melinda Gates Millennium Scholarships. As in recent years Benson and Lincoln High School vied for the best graduation rate among Portland's public high schools.

**CONGRATULATIONS TO
THE BENSON CLASS OF 2012!!!**

Your Alumni Association Needs You!!!

The Benson Polytechnic High School Alumni Association (BPHSAA) is what the Benson graduates make it. It's strictly a volunteer directed and run organization. It picks its own activities and areas of focus.

In its four years of existence BPHSAA has split its efforts between offering social opportunities for the alumni to connect with each other and the "saving" and supporting of Benson's current programs. The events and activities have changed from year to year reflecting alumni feedback. As Benson's future has become clearer the Association's efforts have shifted to strengthening existing programs and increasing enrollment. They also reflect the passions of those alumni serving as Directors and others involved in the various BPHSAA activities. A number of new ventures are being discussed and planned.

Nothing is cast in stone and new ideas and ventures are always welcome. So, in a nutshell, if you want your Alumni Association to do something different and/or new, come to one of the monthly Board of Director meetings, speak up, get involved, join a committee. BPHSAA is the alumni organization that you want it to be! Join the effort!!

Meeting times and locations can be found on the BPHSAA website...www.bensontechalumni.org.

Benson's Outlook for 2012-2013

Benson will have about 260 incoming students this fall consistent with Portland Public School (PPS) overall plan for the city's public high schools. PPS has set the Benson target enrollment at 850 students. The entering freshman class was picked by lottery this Spring from the approximately 400 applicants. The BPHSAA continues to work with Benson's staff to get PPS to increase the number of entering students as well as the total enrollment.

Benson like the other Portland public schools will have a slightly smaller budget and a smaller staff as the District continues to struggle with limited resources. However, there will be no elimination of majors or technical programs as the cuts in recent years required. Benson's teachers and staff are looking forward to another year of strong academic achievement. In the past 5 years Benson's academic test results put it among the top high schools in the Portland area.

Construction Design at Benson

A new Construction Design program is coming back to Benson this fall. The school's historic architecture major and basic drafting programs were discontinued in June 2010 and the Engineering major was closed in 2007, as Benson suffered a series of serious budget cuts. Recognizing the importance of design and drafting skills to Benson's technical programs, Benson's principal Carol Campbell has "pieced-together" a new program from the school's limited finances and with some assistance of volunteers from some local Benson graduates.

The plan is to begin offering an introductory drafting course this fall similar to the Freshman and Sophomore level classes of the past. The hope is to revive an Architectural and/or Engineering major in the next couple of years.

The classes will use equipment and text books that was saved from the old drafting labs, however, other equipment and supplies such as drafting boards, parallel rule bars (or T-squares), tables, and chairs will have to be found, donated, or purchased. The BPHSAA intends to continue its support towards the revival of an even larger design program at Benson. Anyone interested in the program and/or contributing might contact Dick Spies (Class of '64) via info@bensontechalumni.org.

Another Benson House Sold

The latest Benson-student designed and built house was completed in May 2012. The completion was marked by an open house attended by school district officials, newspaper and TV reporters, Benson students, teachers, and alumni. The 3-bedroom, 2-bath, great room floor plan home is the most energy efficient home built by the school thus far and features an abundance of beautiful custom cabinetry. Located in northeast Portland, the home was put up for sale soon after the open house and sold in 2 days for more than the listing price.

This fall work will begin on the next house on the adjacent lot. The design for that house has been contributed by Dick Spies, a Benson graduate ('64) and BPHSAA Director. Dick is continuing to work with Benson's staff and students through the various stages of permitting and construction.

Our thanks to all who contributed to the creation of this home. Through your donations of time and materials, you keep the tradition of the Benson House under construction.

Contacting the BPHSAA

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Website: www.BensonTechAlumni.org
Email: Info@BensonTechAlumni.org



Custom wood cabinets and granite countertops in the recently completed Benson House.

Pep Band Starts 2nd Year

This past year the Alumni Association sponsored the Alumni Benson Pep Band to play at athletic and other events. Benson no longer has a band or music program as the result of the school district's budget and its decision to focus Benson's programs strictly on technical/career technical education programs.

The band, led by Wayne Devore ('71), played at a number of the boy's basketball games and accompanied the team to the state tournament in Eugene. As it starts its 2nd year, the band hopes to add more alumni members and current Benson students. If you are interested in joining the band, email Wayne at info@bensontechalumni.org.

Tech Show Reminder

This coming year the Tech Show will again be in early to middle February. By having Tech Show in February, it helps Benson's effort to "recruit" new students who must turn in their application to attend Benson by the end of February. The Alumni Association, as in recent years, will be hosting the Alumni Welcome Room with yearbooks and refreshments. The BPHSAA's webpage will have the exact dates later this fall.

Meet Fellow Alumni @ Kenton Station

The monthly gathering of Benson alumni continues at Kenton Station in North Portland on the 4th Tuesday of every month. This is an informal and laid-back hour or two to meet other Benson alumni and share experiences during and since your days at Benson. The happy hour prices are low, the big selection of beer is good, and the Benson spirit soars. There is NO solicitation for ANYTHING – not even the modest \$12 for annual dues to the association.

See the Association's webpage for any last minute changes in the date and time as well as any additional Alumni gatherings (including class reunions). Kenton Station is owned by a Benson graduate and is located at 8803 N. Denver Ave.