

BENSON TECH TEXT

The Benson Polytechnic High School Alumni Association's Official Newsletter

August 2008 –The Inaugural Issue

ALUMNI ORGANIZATION FORMED

In recent months a group of Benson HS graduates have formed an Alumni Association to promote and support Benson Polytechnic HS and to facilitate social activities for its alumni.

The Association is up and running and intends in the coming months to actively work to support and enhance Benson's long time technical programs as the Portland School District wrestles with district-wide funding issues (see "Benson's Future" article that follows). It also intends to build on the 2007 and 2008 all-class picnics to hold future summer alumni picnics as well as to support the reunions of the individual classes. In addition, the Association will continue and expand the previously established "Reunion Scholarship Fund" as it raises money for scholarships to graduating seniors (see "Grads Receive...").

The Association is guided by a 15 member board but with a majority of its activities conducted through several committees. Current officers are Dale Bajema (Chair), Josh Piper (Vice Chair), Paul Benninghoff (Treasurer), and Tammy Hite (Secretary). The Board meets quarterly. The Association's next annual meeting including the election of five Board members will be in August 2009.

Membership is open to any former student of Benson Polytechnic HS. Annual dues are currently \$12. (Those joining now will get the benefit of membership for 16 months through the end of 2009.) Former and current Benson teachers as well

as friends of the school may join as non-voting members. Dues will allow the organization to maintain a website, mail information to members, build and maintain a roster of Benson's alumni, sponsor the annual picnic and other gatherings, and to represent and support Benson wherever it can. This will help to create one of the best Polytechnic High Schools in the country.

Additional information about the Association and its activities is available from its website www.BensonTechAlumni.org. The Association can also be reached by email info@bensontechalumni.org or by regular mail addressed to Benson Polytechnic High School, Alumni Association, 546 NE 12th Ave, Portland, Oregon 97232.

BENSON'S FUTURE UP IN THE AIR

Facing financial problems and dwindling school enrollments the Portland Public School Board in June 2008 released a report titled "Task Force – Strategic Plan on Career Readiness (CTE, Pathways and More)". While the Report looks at Career Technical Education for the entire District the future of Benson is definitely on the line.

The Task Force Report examines how all of the schools in the District provide career awareness and preparation with an emphasis on CTE (career technical education) at Benson Polytechnic HS since the school houses the majority of the District's CTE programs. It contains a brief assessment of Benson's current situation and problems facing the District. It moves on to offer four alternative future

models for CTE among the District's high schools. In simple terms:

Model A – Benson would become an Advanced Learning Center offering CTE for 11th and 12th graders who would attend half days while going to their neighborhood schools the rest of the day.

Model B – Benson would provide selected CTE (the other HS would offer other alternative CTE programs) to 9th-12th graders who would attend full time. (This option is what Benson is now.)

Model C – Benson would become an Advance Learning Center for all of the District's CTE programs for 11th-12th graders who would attend full time.

Model D – Benson would be slightly restructured so that the 9th -10th graders would divide their time between core HS classes and career exploration and the 11th-12th graders would spend half time at Benson in technical career preparation classes and other half in on-line learning, Portland Community College classes or in internships.

The Oregonian printed an article on July 12, 2008 titled "Benson High School at a Crossroads" that further describes the report and situation at Benson. This can be found on www.Oregonlive.com

It is expected the School Board will make a decision on Benson's future this fall or early 2009. The Benson Alumni Association intends to actively work independently and with other groups studying the options with the hope of influencing the Board's decision.

While the Association remains open to all ideas it is inclined at this time towards the option of continuing Benson as a 4 year polytechnic HS but with a major enhancement of its programs and capabilities. The Association believes that through Benson's graduates and their connections in many of Portland's business and technical organizations additional support and resources can be mobilized to build an even better Benson for the 21st Century.

The Alumni Association has established a Benson Long Term Development Committee to address the issue. Given the School Board's timeline, the committee would like input as soon as possible from anyone interested in Benson's future. If you are interested in being a part of the committee or have a suggestion, please contact the Association at info@bensontechalumni.org or call Dale Bajema at 360/576-4872.

CLASS OF 2008 RECEIVE DIPLOMAS

On June 3rd another class of Benson seniors received diplomas in Commencement ceremonies held at Memorial Coliseum.

The Benson Alumni Association salutes the academic and extracurricular accomplishments of those graduates, and welcomes them into the proud ranks of the thousands of Benson graduates before them. In recognition of their accomplishments the Association is offering free membership through December 2009 to all 2008 graduates that apply before March 1, 2009.

GRADS RECEIVE ALUMNI SCHOLARSHIPS

Two graduating Benson seniors, Tony Chen and Tenzin Paylon were given scholarships from the Benson Polytechnic High School Reunion Scholarship Fund this past June. The Fund established by a group of Benson alumni has granted 43 scholarships since 1991. Both Tony and Tenzin will be going to Portland Community College this fall.

The tax exempt "Reunion Scholarship Fund" was established in 1991 by the Classes of 1939, 1940 and 1941 who had a joint reunion and had money left over. In successive years an annual fund raising campaign added to the original amount that has been invested in the Oregon Community Foundation. The Fund now has over \$85,000 allowing it to award 2 or more scholarships from the annual interest. Keeping with Benson's technical traditions the Fund has targeted students

planning to attend technical schools, community colleges, or entering an apprentice program.

The recently formed Benson Alumni Association will henceforth provide an organizational home for the "Reunion Scholarship Fund". However, the scholarship contributions and the related endowed funds will be kept strictly separated.

It is expected that the 2008 request for contributions will be mailed out in October. To make an early contribution or for additional information contact Don LaBarre at 360/944-8983 or dondee3211@msn.com.

WEBSITE UNDER CONSTRUCTION

The Alumni Association is in the process of building a website at www.BensonTechAlumni.org that will be running in late August describing the organization and its functions, a membership application form, and the newsletter. As the fall progresses the website will be expanded to include updated newsletters, athletic schedules (and scores) and other Benson events and activities, upcoming reunions, minutes of the Association's meetings, and updates on the organization's various activities including its efforts concerning Benson's future.

The website will increasingly be the Alumni Association's primary means of communicating with its members as is fitting for the alumni of a polytechnic high school in the 21st century. However, paper copies of the website information will be made available to members without electronic access by writing to the Association at the address above in "Alumni Org..."

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Most of the work of the Benson Polytechnic HS Alumni Association is done through its standing and special committees. These include Membership, Communications, Finance, and the Reunion Scholarship Fund committees.

The Association intends this fall to actively engage in the public discussion of the future of Benson Polytechnic HS. A special committee has been formed to lead that effort. The Association would appreciate ideas, assistance and support of anyone interested in Benson's future.

Help is also needed in the continued development and support of what is hoped to be the best alumni website in the country.

To volunteer for any of the above contact the Association via mail info@bensontechalumn.org

FALL ATHELETIC SCHEDULES ANNOUNCED

For the rest of the schedules below, other Fall sports, and for the junior varsity and freshman schedules see our website or contact Benson's Athletic Department at 503/916-5100.

Men's Football -- Varsity

Aug 28	Roosevelt	@Cleveland	5:00
Sept 5	St. Helens	Away	7:00
Sept 12	Parkrose	Away	7:00
Sept 19	Cleveland	Away	7:00
Oct 3	Lincoln***	Away	7:00

*** Benson's Homecoming Game

Women's Volleyball --Varsity

Sept 4	Beaverton	Away	TBA
Sept 6	Southridge Tournament	Away	8:00(am)
Sept 9	Sunset	Home	6:30
Sept 13	Aloha	Away	6:30



BENSON HOUSE

The latest addition to Portland's collection of Benson Houses was recently completed. The 3-bedroom, 2-bath home stands on the southwest corner of SE Kelly and 49th; a few blocks north of Powell Boulevard. The 1783 square foot house has hardwood floors, granite countertops, vaulted ceilings, a large private master suite and a spacious great room. It also can boast earning the highest rating from Energy Star for its high efficient appliances and heating and on-demand water heater.

The blueprint for the home was chosen from 8-possible designs created by the Benson Senior Architecture students in March of 2004. The students faced several design challenges when planning the project that included; keeping the existing 2-car garage, preserving a large fir tree near the front of the lot, and the numerous building codes and zoning requirements enforced by the City of Portland.

Building Construction students began laying the foundation for the home under the watchful eye of Tony Franciscone and Rich Weber (Benson class of '75) in the spring of 2005. Over the course of the next 3-school years, students assisted with nearly every phase of construction, though contractors were brought in to work on the plumbing, electrical wiring, and drywall. Many local businesses contributed to the project through the donation of time or materials.

Between construction and architecture, over 200 students had a part in the design and completion of the home. Each and every one of them should be proud of what they have accomplished. They not only learned about residential construction, but they acquired knowledge of work ethics, time management, problem solving, teamwork, and many other skills that employers look for; skills that Benson has a long tradition of instilling in their students.

The home is currently on the market and priced at \$389,000. All proceeds from the sale of the home go to support the Building Construction program at Benson. If you would like more information on how to purchase this home, please contact Scott with Windermere Community Commercial at 503-249-1706.

Construction on the next Benson House will begin this fall on a site located at NE Mallory and Skidmore. The home is to be 1-story with 1560 square feet, 3-bedrooms, 2-baths and a single car garage. The plans were developed by 3-seniors from the architecture program this past spring with the help of former Benson architecture teacher and alumna, Tammy Hite ('91).



SCHEDULED CLASS REUNIONS

To assist the various classes the Association will list on its website information about upcoming class reunions and other class events. (The Association will also assist in providing any alumni information it has with those organizing class activities.)