



## BENSON TECH ALUMNI TEXT

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*The Official Newsletter of the Benson Polytechnic High School Alumni Association (BPHSAA), August 2017 Edition*

### **Support the Benson Tech Foundation**

Several years ago, Benson Tech alumni formally incorporated the Benson Tech Foundation and obtained its IRS 501(c)3 tax-exempt status, allowing gifts to the Foundation to be deducted on tax forms. The Foundation's mission, as stated in its charter, is to raise funds and tangible resources to exclusively support the school's technical programs. In the ensuing years, the Foundation has been fortunate to receive a number of important gifts.

Now with the passage of the May 2017 capital bond measure that will devote more than \$200 million to modernize Benson Tech, the Foundation is kicking off a major effort to raise funds for new and replacement equipment for the new building, as well as to use "its good offices" to seek off-site space to temporarily house some of the school's technical shops during the upcoming school modernization.

Note: In addition to the Benson Tech Foundation, tax-exempt donations can be made for scholarships to the Oregon Community Foundation (with the notation "Benson Polytechnic High School Alumni Scholarship Fund"). Or donations can be made directly to Benson Polytechnic High School for any athletic program, extracurricular activity like the Robotics Club or the Black Student Union, or any regular school program like science or math. Needless to elaborate: help is always needed and appreciated.



**Top:** Classic cars on display at the Golf Tournament and Cruise-in at the Colwood Golf Center, one of the highlights of the during the all-class Grand Reunion celebrating Benson Tech's Centennial, held June 9 -11. **Below:** Visitors tour some of the school's shops as part of the Grand Reunion.

### **BPHSAA Grand Reunion deemed a success**

The June 9-11 Grand Reunion organized by the BPHSAA to observe the school's centennial drew several hundred alumni, teachers and supporters. All five of the weekend's events: the Meet & Greet, Benson Tech school tours and picnic, Gala Dinner, Brunch Cruise, and Golf Tournament and Cruise-In, were well-attended. The Class of 1977, marking its 40th anniversary, was especially well-represented. A number of those attending the reunion opted to join the BPHSAA, and several have since attended the association's monthly board meeting (see reminder on back cover for board meeting dates).

In light of the expressed interest, and to continue the renewed connections among the alumni and within the Benson community, the BPHSAA Board of Directors is considering some sort of a winter/spring social event and perhaps an annual summer golf tournament and/or cruise-in (see article on Page 3).



## ***Benson Tech Athletic Program again under attack***

PPS Athletic Director Marshall Haskin is again attempting to kill or reduce Benson Tech's almost-100-year-old athletic program. He believes that Benson Tech's recent losing seasons in several sports is reason enough to stop those sports. He further believes that Benson Tech, as a focus option/magnet school, should disqualify it from having an athletic program.

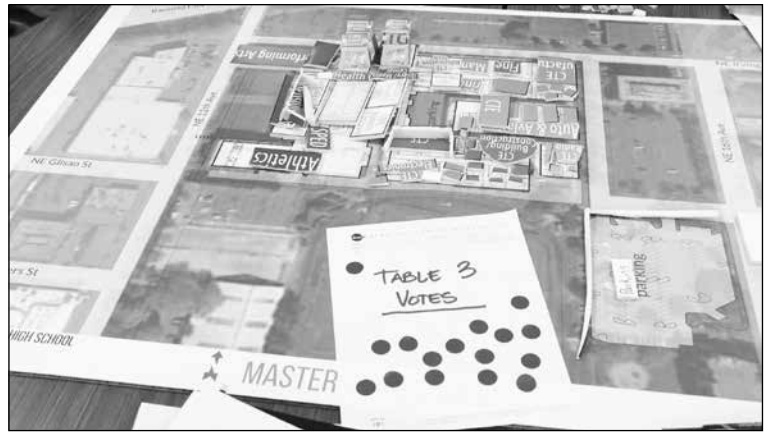
As of this writing, Haskin's efforts are largely behind the scenes in staff discussion and working papers, but given his overt actions three years ago to do this, his ideas are a real threat. Getting word of his efforts, Benson Tech students, teachers and coaches, parents and supporters marched upon the School Board on June 20 and July 11 drawing media coverage.

Several Benson Tech alumni, students and alumni have testified to the PPS Board to oppose any action to curtail athletics at the school.

In response, the PPS Board has asked that the Benson Tech "Save Our Sports" activists to comment on an audit Haskin had done of Benson Tech's athletics. The Board and interim PPS superintendent issued a "weak statement," saying no action is underway or planned that would affect Benson Tech's athletics. However, close observers believe Haskin will persist.

Outraged? Make your voice heard! Call, email or write to the Portland Public Schools Superintendent ([superintendent@pps.net](mailto:superintendent@pps.net)) and/or the Board of Education ([schoolboard@pps.net](mailto:schoolboard@pps.net)). Testify before the Board of Education at its bimonthly meeting (visit [www.pps.org](http://www.pps.org) for times).

***For the latest information about Benson Tech's athletic schedule, visit the Portland Interscholastic League website ([www.pilathletics.com](http://www.pilathletics.com)) and click in the "Schedules" section.***



## **Next steps for modernizing Benson Tech's campus**

Now that the Portland voters have passed, with a 66% favorable vote, a capital bond measure on May 16 that includes about \$200 million to modernize Benson Tech, detailed planning will commence, probably by the end of 2017, with actual construction to begin about three years later in 2020, and completion targeted in 2024. The bond money earmarked for Benson Tech remedy existing safety and health issues and modernize the school for the coming decades.

Most of a preliminary design for an updated Benson Polytechnic High School for 1,700 students was done prior to the May 16 special election by Bassetti Architects, with considerable input from a Master Planning Committee. That committee that met for over a year was made up of Benson Tech alumni, teachers, students and community members.

The next steps will be for Portland Public Schools (PPS) to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the actual design and then the award of a construction contract. It is expected the design (building documentation, schematic design, and development of construction documents) to take between two to three years. The design process will be more time-consuming because of PPS' intention to renovate existing classrooms and technical work space and construct new areas while "school is still open" for Benson Tech and the other PPS educational programs in the building. It is likely that a new Design Advisory Group (DAG) will be formed of teachers, students and others to provide additional input during that time.

The probable three-year actual construction effort will hence include moving the classrooms and the students "back and forth within the building" over the three years so that construction work can proceed in one area, and then classes will be moved to the completed areas. (There is some thought that some off-site space may be found within a few blocks of Benson Tech for housing some of the technical shops for a year or two.) While one might wish that this modernization could happen "right now," tangible work will soon be underway.



## Fall outlook at Benson Tech

Curtis Wilson, Benson Tech principal, is anticipating about 1,050 students to show up for the first day of school on Aug. 30. This will include 300 freshmen allowed under the PPS District's cap and 20 sophomores transferring in from other schools. Freshmen class schedules will include a rotation through all of Benson Tech's technical study areas.

About 250 juniors will join 210 seniors in their selected areas of technical study, which now include Automotive, Construction, Electric, Manufacturing, Digital Communication, Radio, Health Occupation, Architecture, Computer Sciences, and new this fall (again) Engineering. (The latter three technical study areas had been lost 8-10 years ago, but have been restored.)

Benson's extracurricular activities this fall will include about 20 clubs plus teams football, cross country, Volleyball and men and women soccer. (See article on Page 2 regarding the future threat to Benson Tech's athletic program.)

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## 2017 BPHSAA Scholarship winners

Congratulations to **Savannah Johnson**, **Saleh Abdoulaye**, and **Miles Wood** for winning scholarships funded by the BPHSAA's Scholarship Fund. Savannah will be continuing her health occupation studies at Portland Community College (PCC). Saleh will be studying transportation at PCC and Portland State University (PSU), and Miles will studying manufacturing at PCC

The \$4,800 for these three scholarships come from the annual interest on funds the BPHSAA has specially invested in the Oregon Community Foundation. The Benson Tech Alumni Scholarship Fund originated in a donation by several 1950s-era classes, and has been since increased by individual donations through an annual December fund drive. This scholarship program is aimed at students wanting to attend a community college or other technical schools to follow up on their studies at Benson Tech.

Want more information about the BPHSAA Scholarship Fund? Or have a few dollars for a good cause? If you would like to donate by check, make it payable to: "The Oregon Community Foundation," with a memo of: "Benson Polytechnic High School Alumni Scholarship Fund." Checks can be mailed to The Oregon Community Foundation, 1221 SW Yamhill St., Suite 100, Portland, Oregon 97205. Online donations are accepted on the BPHSAA website. Please note that there is a \$25 minimum for donations made online or by check. For more info, contact Josh Piper, BPHSAA Scholarship Chair, through the BPHSAA website, [www.bensontechalumni.org](http://www.bensontechalumni.org).



## BPHSAA plans more activities

Following better-than-anticipated turnout at the June 9-11 Benson Tech Grand Reunion to observe the school's Centennial, the BPHSAA has started to plan a winter or spring social to facilitate additional connections and reminiscences among graduates from all classes. Look for dates and details on the BPHSAA website as they are worked out — it is likely to be in April 2018.

Some interest has also been expressed to have another cruise-in and golf tournament next summer at the Colwood Golf Center, and consideration is also being given to reviving the former monthly gathering of alumni at Kenton Station (owned by a Benson alum in North Portland. Such events like these or any other are helped along by the help of volunteers — interested? Get in touch via email.

Per the BPHSAA's bylaws, it is required to have an annual meeting that includes the election of its directors. Previous efforts to have an annual meeting either at a summer picnic or during Tech Show have been less than successful. Current thinking is to have the annual meeting as a stand-alone event — probably at Benson Tech — that may include refreshments and a short presentation relevant to the BPHSAA and/or the school, e.g. update on a final design for school modernization. Again, visit the website for the date and details.

## Centennial newsletter now online

For the all-class Grand Reunion to observe Benson Tech's Centennial, the BPHSAA produced a 22-page special edition of the Alumni Text newsletter. In words and pictures, it traced Benson past to the present and its planned future. Only a few paper copies remain, but it is now available on the BPHSAA website for online perusal or for downloading. (Thanks again to volunteer extraordinaire, Connie Mar, for her "behind-the-scenes" editing of the BPHSAA newsletters.)





**Join the BPHSAA and support Benson Tech!**

The BPHSAA has two major purposes: to provide social activities for friends, faculty and alumni of Benson Tech, and to promote and support the school. There are many opportunities to participate in the BPHSAA and help support Benson Tech: first and foremost, becoming a member; simply attending a monthly board meeting; helping out at the Annual August Community Picnic or at Tech Show; or joining one of our advocacy efforts for Benson Tech.

Annual membership dues are currently \$20/year with a portion going to support the school. As a paid member, you

**Save the Date - 2018 Tech Show announced**

Mark your calendars and come — the next Tech Show will be February 15 and 16, 2018. The BPHSAA expects to be again welcoming alumni, their families and supporters in the old gym. Some new features and lots of pictures are being considered.



can vote at the Annual Meeting, be a director or committee chairperson, and/or serve on a committee. To join the BPHSAA or for news about activities, please visit the website: [www.bensontechalumni.org](http://www.bensontechalumni.org). For additional information, suggestions and/or comment, email the BPHSAA and its officers at [info@bensontechalumni.org](mailto:info@bensontechalumni.org).

**Board of Directors monthly meeting dates for 2017**

The BPHSAA Board meets the second Monday of each month at 5:30 p.m. in the library at Benson Polytechnic High School, 546 NE 12th Ave. All alumni are welcome to attend!



**Benson Polytechnic High School Alumni Association**

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