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## Many share memories of BHS during BHS 50th Anniversary

By Melissa Burden  
Contributing Writer

For those who attended Bedford High School's 50th Anniversary weekend, many smiles were shared remembering the first days of school at the new building.

For Beryl Preketes, a retired teacher, the new high school meant there was an expansion of classes that could be offered.

"I remember teaching art at the junior high and then teaching the first art class at the high school," Preketes, 91, said. "Everything was so new and the kids were excited."

The new high school on Jackman Road opened in 1965, replacing the former high school building on Douglas Road which opened in 1951.

As the district and Bedford community grew, the old high school was unable to hold all of its students at once. Classes were split, with upperclassmen and underclassmen occupying the building at different times.

Alice Preketes, a member of the class of 1966, the first graduating class, remembered the affect the new school had on her and her classmate's social life.

"I was a senior so it was nice to be in the new school," she said. "We were going half days before then so when the school opened we were able to be with all of our friends. There were many fun things including having a brand new theater department. We were able to be with our friends and I just liked the new school better."

Tom Chevalier, a member of the Class of 1968, and his wife Beth, class of 1970, came from their home in Seneca, South Carolina, to celebrate with old friends.

"I remember just how new it was and how exciting it was to be here," Tom said. "It was a beautiful school back then and it still looks good now."

"We were high school sweethearts here so the school holds many memories for me," Beth said. "There was always a lot of school spirit here and there still is."

Bill Orth, class of 1967, said he enjoyed the weekend, especially having the chance to catch up with former classmates.

"It was really good to see old friends," Orth said. "I grew up across the street and remember watching it being built. It was like having a new toy around. I remember riding go-carts and building forts here. I just have a lot of great memories here."

According to Edd Bankow-ski, co-chair of the 50th Anniversary Celebration Committee, the weekend was really meant to be a tribute to the whole school system.

"We are celebrating 'Excellence in Education,'" Bankowski said. "I remember the newness of the school and the fact that physical education was held in a classroom. The gym was not done yet so that, to me, was the only downside. I have a lot of great memories here. Now, the high school really is a great place to be."

On Friday, and as part of the BHS homecoming, there was a showcase including the Mules Marching Band with added alumni majorettes and marchers. Across from the entrance to the stadium, two large tents were filled with graduates, food service, and a place for all former Mules to mingle.

On Saturday everyone had the opportunity to walk the halls once again, to reminisce and to view classic memorabilia. While the school was open for a visit, an alumni band and choir were rehearsing for an afternoon celebration program. Saturday's activities included an open house at the high school and a reception in the junior high cafeteria. There was also a concert and a program on the history of the schools.

Former Choir Director, C. David Parker, was also thrilled to come home to BHS. While at the high school, Parker saw 400 students a day between choir, Varsity

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Pictures continued on page 6)









# DRE needs help from volunteers for community build playground project

Two years ago, shortly after Hunter Gandee successfully carried his younger brother Braden on the Cerebral Palsy Swagger to Ann Arbor to raise Cerebral Palsy awareness, the brothers embarked on another project. This project was to have a handicap-accessible playground constructed at Braden's school, Douglas Road Elementary (DRE), so that Braden could play on the playground with his classmates as well as the availability for other kids with mobility difficulties in the community to use the playground.

After fundraising and seeking grants, the playground is set to become a reality. DRE PTA President Donnie Stevens said that they have almost reached the fundraising goal of \$175,000 to purchase Phase 1, which is the largest part of the project.

Ground has been broken and site preparation is being finished. The cost of installation would have been \$50,000 so it was decided to have the unassembled playground delivered and to use a crew of volunteers for a community build to assemble the 2,000 pieces of the play structure.

Assembly work began on Monday, October 5, with shifts of two to three hours available through Saturday, October 10

with an option of additional days if needed. Volunteers needed include: a contractor, team leaders and workers that are comfortable with the use of tools. There are also a couple of smaller portions of the playground that will require their own team, such as a high stepper and a double swing and painting.

If you are unable to help with the build but still want to be of assistance, food donations are needed. Donations of pre-packaged snacks, chips, cookies, Gatorade, water, etc. can be dropped off at the Douglas Road Elementary office between 8:30 a.m. and 4 p.m.

"Please consider giving a day, or a few hours, of your time in one of these areas. Plenty of hands will be needed over the course of this build and we will welcome any and all help," Stevens stated. "Help us fulfill the dream of an all inclusive playground for children at DRE and our surrounding community."

To volunteer, go to <http://goo.gl/forms/ySWy55CyiJ> and fill out the form indicating times you are available to help.

For questions or other ways you might be available to help, contact Donnie Stevens at [president@drepta.org](mailto:president@drepta.org) or (419) 450-6584.



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## BHS 50th Anniversary

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Singers, and the Girls Glee Club. He was also responsible for forming the Sweet Adelines, Mens Glee Club and the Soiree Singers.

"It's beyond words to express how I felt about the Bedford 50th Anniversary weekend," Parker said. "I had so many wonderful times that

emotions were overwhelming. I was so in awe of how many choir, Soiree Singers and other choral ensemble alumni returned. What an honor it was to conduct them all again. There were lot's of tears."

Parker added that some of the most memorable moments were alumni coming up and telling him what an impact and influence he had on them in a positive way.

"I had a lot of people tell me that 'Singing made me a better person,'" he said. "Returning to Bedford was like coming home. This is where my career began and where I was most successful. Friends like Paul and Sue Stanifer, and Pauline Tolly will be in my life forever. Parents, students and administration present when I was there in the beginning were amazing and so supportive. Thank you. Thank you forever for the community support."

Mary Lou Zausms, retired Bedford Public Schools administrator, said, "I had a *BLAST* at the reunion. It was wonderful to talk to 'students' from my first Grade Nine English class in 1970. I was so impressed with the people who put the celebration together; the enthusiasm for our high school and its history is something that you do not find in just any com-

munity. Thank you to all who returned to Bedford for the event and offering the most meaningful reward to those who gave their time. Go Mules!"

For Bankowski and the committee, the weekend went off as planned and without a hitch.

"All of us on the planning committee were very pleased with how it went, from the Mule Mingle on Friday, the football game/alumni band/the halftime, the high school tour on Saturday morning, as well as the afternoon of performing arts and award presentations at the junior high school," Bankowski said. "Everything went well. So many positive things have come out of it. It was so great to see all the hugs between past alumni, and everyone enjoying their weekend.

Bankowski said the planning committee worked very hard to put on the weekend long event.

"Everyone on the committee stepped up to the plate and contributed in whatever ways they could," he said. "I really appreciated how the whole music department, past and present, came together for the afternoon performance on Saturday. Kudos to Paul and Sue Stanifer, C. David Parker, Cory

Meggitt, Mark and Sue Smith, Ron Koch, Len Salvo, Mark and Dee Ellsworth, Dave Ripper, Jon Diener, and probably more. There are so many people that made this 'once in a lifetime' event come together. I truly enjoyed being a part of the planning and helping it to be so successful."

Paul Stanifer, co-chair, agreed the weekend was a huge success.

"The Bedford High School 50th Celebration was a tremendous success all due to many individuals stepping into various leadership roles, all in planning for the weekend," Stanifer said. "In all, so many are to be congratulated for accepting the challenge in producing the two days of hand shakes and hugs. From Bedford's Superintendent of Schools Mark Kleinhan, to those that shuttled guests, and everyone in between. As a former teacher in Bedford, a place where we lived for 35 years, and where my career started, I encourage all that live here to cherish this school district and to continue your support for a district that continues to display pride."

For those who would like to see more photos of the eventful weekend, please go to [www.bedford50th.com](http://www.bedford50th.com).

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