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BHS Alumni Association seeking new members that want to get involved



Formed in 1996, the BHS Alumni Association had a goal of constructing a stadium at BHS. Bedford Community Stadium was built in 1997. The Alumni Association is seeking people to join the organization who have the ideas and energy to achieve the organization's goals for the future. Pictured l to r: Chuck Faller, current president, Steve Lennex, first Alumni Association president, Rollie Abel, member of the Alumni Association and the Stadium Committee, Gene Stock, Bedford Community Stadium Committee co-chairman and Laura Collins, current treasurer. Not pictured are Pam Krell, current secretary and Bill Regnier, director.

By Jackie Giroux
Reporter

The Bedford High School Alumni Association was formed in 1996 and as sometimes the case in organizations, the enthusiasm dwindles over the years and just a few people are relied upon to keep the organization going and coordinate projects.

"We've been an organization of four people for a very long time now and frankly we've just run out of the energy needed for everything we do," said Alumni Association President, Chuck Faller. "At our age, we can't continue to do this forever."

In addition to Faller, Pam Krell serves as secretary, Laura Collins as treasurer and Bill Regnier as trustee. "Bill has been with the Alumni Association since the beginning," Faller said. "I started going to meetings in 1998 and have served as president since January 1999." Collins said she has served as treasurer for at least 10 years and Krell said, "I was secretary in the early years, took a couple years off and back as secretary for 10 years or more."

"It would be nice to transition this to younger people that have access to the schools

and the students that have the energy. That would be great," Faller said.

He added that the leadership positions would not just be dumped in someone's lap, but that he and his fellow office holders would aid in the transition and share their knowledge.

An informational meeting for anyone interested in joining the Alumni Association will be held on Wednesday, August 5 at 7 p.m. in Study Room C at the Bedford Branch Library, located at 8575 Jackman Rd. in Temperance. Attending or graduating from BHS is not a requirement to join the Alumni Association. The organization is open to all BHS alumni and anyone who has an interest in promoting Bedford High School.

During the meeting the history of the Alumni Association and its future will be discussed as well as an opportunity for those attending to ask questions about the organization.

"The best time to become a member of the Alumni Association is when your kids are in school – you could give of your time. It's been very rewarding for me," Faller said.

When the Bedford High School Alumni Association was formed, founders deter-

mined several basic points as its foundation. The first is to encourage camaraderie between Bedford graduates and other people who are interested in the well being of Bedford High School. The second point is to provide assistance for current students, followed by keeping members informed about what is happening at Bedford High School and undertaking special school related projects. Lastly, to sponsor the Bedford High School Hall of Fame, which recognizes outstanding achievements of Bedford High School alumni as well as teachers, coaches, administrators and other staff.

The greatest achievement credited to the Alumni Association is the construction of the Bedford Community Stadium, which was built in 1997. No tax dollars were used in its construction – the Alumni Association assumed responsibility for yearly payments on a \$1 million loan.

The stadium is rather unique as it is not just used for school functions but is available for the community to use. Chances are that many members of the Bedford community have attended a function there. In addition to Bedford football

games, people have gathered there to watch the Bedford fireworks and to participate in the annual Relay For Life event. Last year a vigil was held during the Compassion, Food & Fun event for those who have lost a child and also last year a concert was held at the stadium during the Celebrate Bedford event.

"The Bedford Alumni Association is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization," Collins said. Members worked hard and paid down a majority of the \$1 million debt of the stadium. A couple of local businesses stepped forward and assumed the remaining debt.

In 2011 a 12-year, \$264,000 agreement was reached with Grogan's Towne car dealership, which gave them naming rights to the field. The agreement did not pay off the debt entirely, leaving an amount responsible by the Alumni Association. In 2012 Barron Insurance agreed to pay \$10,000 for the next 10 years, giving them advertising rights at the stadium. Of the \$10,000, \$6,000 goes toward the stadium debt and \$4,000 is set aside in a fund for the construction of permanent restroom facilities at the stadium – the next phase of plans for the stadium.

"Between the Grogan's Towne pledge and the Barron Insurance pledge, the stadium payments are made every year. We don't have any debt," Faller said.

He said he hopes that by getting some new people involved in the Alumni Association that the organization can get back to doing some of the fun things they used to do in the community.

One of the things he would like to see return is the induction of members to the Bedford High School Hall of Fame. "We did not do a Hall of Fame last year. It breaks my heart that we did not do one after 10 consecutive years," Faller said. He added that they also used to give out scholarships. "There are some great things this organization could do with the right leadership. You can't do things with just three or four people."

"I just want everyone to know how viable this organization can be. School funding is difficult these days. When you want things better for the kids, the Alumni Association can enhance the funding."

"The organization is important to me and I'd love to see it continue on," Faller said.

"It's been hard, very challenging the last four or five years," Collins said. "I think the Alumni Association is very important and we need to continue. We need members. There are a lot of Bedford alumni out there so hopefully we can get more participation."

As plans are being finalized for the 50th Anniversary of the current Bedford High School building and being made public by organizers (not associated with the Alumni Association) of the event, Gene Stock, Alumni Association member said, "People are asking about the Alumni Association and how they can get involved. That's wonderful; that's what we've always wanted."

If you are interested in joining the Bedford High School Alumni Association, plan on attending the August 5 meeting. Contact Chuck Faller at (419) 290-6382 or email miracle lanes@buckeye-express.com to let the Alumni Association know you will be attending.

Ideas are welcomed for the revitalization of the organization as well as ideas and interest regarding the next phase of the development of the Community Stadium – the construction of restroom facilities.