

## ► TO THE POINT

Kudos are due the planners and organizers while gratitude goes to the thousands who showed up to support the events.

## Bedford anniversary is thrilling to see

If you were among the Bedford High School alumni who attended the 50th Anniversary Celebration events last weekend, you likely will be talking about the all-school reunion for years to come.

From retired teachers who recognized students from decades ago at Friday's tailgate party to the haunting melodies of "You'll Never Walk Alone" as the alumni choir began its concert selections Saturday, the weekend was filled with "many hugs, many smiles, so many tears of joy," as Supt. Mark Kleinhans said.

The 50th anniversary marks the opening of the existing Bedford High School building at Jackman and Dean Rds. The district consolidated in 1946, and the first building to be called Bedford High School was on Douglas Rd. The construction of the new high school was considered the crowning jewel of a community that had come together after many years of rivalry among the smaller districts and repeated efforts to finance a modern high school building.

Not only could machine shop, art and music classes begin at upper grades, but there finally was enough room for all the students to take classes on a normal schedule.

A population boom in Bedford Township in the years before the Jackman Rd. campus opened meant that high school students in the mid-1960s were taking core academic classes on "split schedule" — two grades in the morning, two in the afternoon.

In addition to strange hours for the students, the arrangement resulted in long days for the teachers and staff.

More than 20 alumni and committee people were listed in the souvenir program as helping to get the idea started or carrying it through and

quite an event it turned out to be.

Alumni started arriving to the tailgate party a half hour before it was scheduled to start Friday, the football game against Ann Arbor Skyline was a sell-out, varsity jackets were proudly worn showing graduation years of decades ago, and former majorettes and at least one former cheerleader were among those who designed special shirts to show off their high school involvement.

Although the events officially were to celebrate all graduates of 1966 through 2015 who attended "new" high school, a call-out at half-time invited anyone who graduated from the old school also to be recognized.

Then on Saturday, there was an open house at the high school that included rarely seen memorabilia.

The finale was a nearly two-hour program that related through short speeches, a dramatic reading and musical performances the activities and achievements of the students, staff and faculty during the past 50 years.

It was an afternoon in which pride was evident in the smiles, applause and several standing ovations, including an enthusiastic round of acclamation even as the alumni musicians were in the last measures of their finale piece, the "Battle Hymn of the Republic."

The weekend of activities were months in the making and involved many hours of planning and coordination. But beyond the kudos to everyone who was involved with the inspiration and organization of this special event, it was refreshing to see the numbers of alumni who were happy to participate, attend and celebrate the occasion whether they lived near or far. That shows the pride that the Bedford Public Schools community has for its district.