

The Pledge of Allegiance is family's heirloom

By Richard Lech
staff writer

It was a touching moment in a classroom at Redford's Keeler Elementary School.

The sixth-grade pupils in teacher Jan Marks' class stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance, just as they and millions of other American schoolchildren do every morning.

Underneath the flag, their visitor, 82-year-old Welby Bellamy Farrell, said the pledge right along with them.

Farrell's presence had a special meaning. As he had told the class minutes earlier, his great uncle, Francis

Bellamy, wrote the pledge 92 years ago.

The sixth graders were impressed. After reciting Bellamy's oath to flag and country, they spontaneously flocked around Farrell to get his autograph.

"I'm very proud of the fact that my great uncle wrote that," Farrell said of the pledge.

FARRELL LIVES with his wife, Fannie, in an apartment at Presbyterian Village, close to Keeler School. He never met his mother's uncle, but Bellamy's legacy instilled in him a great

love of country — and a respect for its flag.

"My family's always been very patriotic. They'd fight for their country," Farrell said.

A leaflet published by the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) tells how Bellamy came to write his short masterpiece.

A resident of Rome, N.Y., Bellamy composed the pledge when he was on the staff of the Youth's Companion, a magazine popular with young people around the turn of the century.

The pledge was first published in the Sept. 8, 1892, issue of the magazine.

Bellamy also happened to be the chairman of the executive committee that planned the National Public School Celebration of Columbus Day in October of that year. He made his freshly written pledge an integral part of the festivities.

"During the celebration it was repeated by more than 12 million public school pupils in every state in the union," the DAR said.

AFTER THAT, the pledge went on to become as much an undisputed American institution as "The Star-Spangled Banner."

Francis Bellamy's claim to having written the pledge did not go uncontested, however. According to the DAR, the family of James Upham, who also was a member of the staff of the Youth's Companion in 1892, contended that Upham had, in fact, written it.

To settle the matter, the now-defunct United States Flag Association appointed a committee of scholars to examine the evidence provided by both families.

The committee unanimously decided in favor of Francis Bellamy, and the American Flag Committee accepted the committee's decision in 1939.

Growing up on the family farm in Indiana, Farrell was aware from an early age of his familial connection to the Pledge of Allegiance.

The pledge, however, was not part of the daily routine at the little red schoolhouse he attended. Although the children occasionally would recite the pledge, their only daily task was to come up with a Bible quotation, which they recited in class.

Young Farrell also was aware of another noted author in the family. Francis Bellamy's brother Edward wrote the 1887 best seller "Looking Backward — 2000 to 1887," a science fiction novel that projected a socialist utopian society for America.

The book inspired the creation of a national political party, the Nationalist Party, but was less-than-inspirational to young Farrell.

"When I was a kid we had a copy around, but I never could get into it," Farrell said.

FARRELL moved to the Detroit area in 1926 and worked for Chrysler Corp. for 38 years before retiring from the engineering department in 1964.

The Farrells once had a framed copy of the pledge written by Francis Bellamy himself, but lent it to a relative, who never returned it.

Yet they have a memory of Bellamy's legacy that transcends any tangible souvenir.

Several years ago the Farrells visited Bellamy's grave in a cemetery in Rome, in central New York State. Signs throughout the city point out the location of the grave marker, which is inscribed with the pledge. An American flag flies over the grave 24 hours a day, Farrell said.

Farrell also flies his flag every day, except in inclement weather, and encourages others in Presbyterian Village to do the same.

"There's no flag that can touch it," Farrell said. "Our own is the most beautiful of any country."

And he's similarly proud of the "republic for which it stands."

"What country in the world could you get that's half as good?"

Area Agency on Aging lists '85 services

The Area Agency on Aging Executive Board has approved funding for the social and nutrition services for older Oakland County residents for fiscal year 1985.

According to Sandra K. Reminga, director of the agency, "All persons 60 years of age and older have access to the services funded by the Area Agency on Aging."

Personal care and homemaker services will be available to those older residents having difficulty in their homes and who are in need of some assistance. In a similar vein, the agency is supporting a home-care program in the county to help the elderly with outdoor and heavier in-home jobs.

A new service this year to assist families of the frail elderly will provide respite care for family caregivers.

Funding will provide counseling services for older adults and outreach services to assist in identifying the needs of isolated area residents.

Senior center developer positions to provide for the development of creative programs were awarded to the City of Royal Oak and the Jewish Community Center.

Services for institutionalized older adults include nursing home ombudsman and advocacy and nursing home community councils.

THE AREA AGENCY is able to make these services available to county older adults through the use of Older Americans Act federal funds, appropriations from the state legislature, and funds contributed to local provider agencies by the County Board of Commissioners.

The local agencies who have been selected to operate the nutrition and social services are the Oakland Livingston Human Service Agency, Oakland County Mobile Meals, Area Services Association, the City of Farmington Hills, City of Royal Oak, Catholic Social Services of Oakland County, Jewish Family Service, Older Persons Commission, Homemaker Service of Metropolitan Detroit, Michigan Association of the Deaf and Hearing Impaired, the Community Councils Association, the Greater Detroit Association for the Blind, and Citizens for Better Care.

The agency is a regional planning,

coordination, allocating and advocacy organization for older adults in six counties of southeastern Michigan. Oakland County is one of the six counties.

County residents serving on the advisory council and executive board are Richard N. Cogger, Doris Shuchter, Mattie Green, Leo Mahany, John Erich, James E. Lanni and Myrtle Hunt.

Madrigal performs 2 holiday concerts

The 70-voice Madrigal Choral of Southfield, under the direction of Carolyn Eymon, will perform in two concerts during the holiday season. The first is scheduled for 8 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 1 in Kirk in the Hills, West Long Lake Road, Bloomfield Hills. The second begins at 8 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 15 in Old St. Mary Church, Grosse Pointe.

Among the numbers the choral will perform is Poulenc's "Gloria," featuring soprano Carolyn Eymon.

Also included in the program are numbers from the repertoire of Schutz, Benjamin Britten, Jean Berger, Robert Shaw, Monteverdi, Handel and Vaughan Williams. Members of the Birmingham-Bloomfield Symphony and an area harpist will accompany the group.

Advance tickets are \$6, or \$4 for students and seniors, available by calling Betty Walker, 661-0707. Tickets at the door are \$7.



Carolyn Grimes

Student gives report on school 'Book Week'

The following article was submitted by Jimmy Seymour, a fifth grader in Larkshire Elementary School, reporting on the school's "Children's Book Week," an annual event which this year featured a "Read-a-Thon."

On Monday, Nov. 12, Mrs. Linda Snavely, a story illustrator, came to Larkshire Elementary to illustrate stories written by the students. Some of the stories were written by Rachel Chudy, Derek Lenz and Jimmy Seymour.

A month ago Mrs. Snavely came to show two stories she had written and some of the characters she has worked with. This time she illustrated stories made up right then or made as a group in class or even chosen as the best from a group of stories within a classroom.

Some of the illustrations were about a boy in camouflage fighting a panther from the story "Spies of the Unicorns" by Jimmy Seymour, a wizard daydreaming of a

unicorn in the story "The Unicorn," and a boy riding a crayon rocket with four bears in the story "Special Friends" by Rachel Chudy.

As a story writer would say, "We will write happily ever after." The End.

The Pelican

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