

# Retirement residence hosts school reunion

By Amy Rauch  
staff writer

It was a reunion unlike any other. Students and teachers of the former Middlebelt Elementary School joined residents of that town's retirement residence last week.

The Farmington Hills school, which closed in 1983 because of declining enrollment, was remodeled and transformed into a retirement home in 1985.

"Someone had the... idea that it'd be fun to have a reunion," said Carol Hamilton, American House Activities director. "We didn't know what kind of turnout it would be, but it was good."

What's unique is to see how they could change a school into such a nice facility," said Karen Uhrich, former paraprofessional at the school.

About 30 former teachers and 15 former students gathered in what was once the gymnasium on Sept. 20. They came back to catch a glimpse of how the building they once occu-

pled had changed.

"It's exciting. It's changed. These people are warm and friendly," said Trudy Danley, who taught second and third grade at Middlebelt Elementary from 1973 to 1983. "It was hard to find our room (classroom). It had changed so much."

"It's fun to see them (former students) and hear what they're doing," she added. "I didn't recognize them. They're all grown up."

Former first-grade teacher Barbara Loughlin greeted former student Richard Kouzoulian with a hug. They hadn't seen each other in about 10 years.

Guest of honor was Beechview Elementary principal Walter Prince, the last principal to serve at Middlebelt Elementary.

**TABLES AROUND** the room displayed former class pictures and books as well as photos outlining development of American House.

While some teachers and students laughed and chatted with each other, others wandered from table to table, pointing out a former teacher or stu-

dent, remarking how things have changed.

"We'd like to do this once a year," said Virginia Beardsley, who taught third grade at Middlebelt. "We make an effort (to see each other), but it's not easy."

Most of the teachers at the reunion moved to other area elementary after the school closed. The last students now attend middle or high school.

Fernica Pletti and Julie Ligenza are former Middlebelt students now eight graders at East Middle School. Last week, they looked through old class pictures and had a chance to see their favorite teacher, Barbara Loughlin.

Heather Bopp, now a junior at Harrison High, is a former Middlebelt student who works as part of the dietary staff at American House.

"It's really neat to look at all the teachers and recognize old faces," Bopp said. "You look once and then you have to look twice to recognize them."

**RESIDENTS MINGLED** with the



Lucille Duchene (left), Lillian Malony and Win-nie Tarrents play their instruments as part of the retirement residence band that performed for the Middlebelt Elementary reunion.

former teachers and students, telling them what American House is like, giving tours of their rooms. Fifteen of the residents, a group called the Music Makers, sang and played tambourines, drums, and horns.

"I love it. It's great," said Ameri-

can House resident Ruth May. "They can see what they've done to this place."

"This used to be a gym," she said, pointing to the room that was now filled with balloons and hors d'oeuvres.

The event was one of several planned by American House based on the theme "Do You Remember?" These special events will recall the early part of this century, a nostalgic time for most American House residents.

# Hills officials eye penalties for ethics violations

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Vagnozzi agreed that disciplinary action is needed to strengthen enforcement of the code. Removal of elected officials should be included as one penalty for serious violations, he said.

Interpretation of ethics is sometimes not the same and there cannot be any clear-cut distinction," Sever said. "The charter is very vague on

how an elected official can be removed. But I don't think it is for other council members to decide. "I am reluctant to give council members the ability to remove an elected council member from office," Sever said. "The people put them in office, the people should take them out."

**THE FINAL** draft of the code will

be approved by the city council and adopted as public policy, Sever said.

The code will act as a guideline on ethics for city officials and employees. It will give the public and the city council the opportunity to "single out" an offender, Sever said.

Several public hearings are possible before the draft is approved as policy.

**NO RESIDENTS** helped write the draft, but city officials are encouraging the public to take part in the hearings. Copies of the draft are at the city clerk's office at city hall, 31555 11 Mile.

"This is rather unique and new to the council as far as how we were going to handle this and what we were going to do," Sever said.

"It is the committee's interest and

sole interest of council to have the best possible document that we can have. If we need additional input from the public in a study session, then that's what we have to do."

A study session will be held near the end of October or the beginning of November, Sever said.

**SILVER SUGGESTED** the city follow the UAW code of ethics, which does not allow acceptance of any gifts, she said.

"I am of the feeling that anyone who works for the city shouldn't receive any kind of gift of any sort from anybody," Silver said.

"I feel that any kind of gift can be considered to have the appearance that would adversely affect the morality of the person accepting the gift and, therefore, the morality of my city government."

Sever requested that the public submit suggestions in writing for the committee to review and discuss during the study session.

"Even after we adopt it (code of ethics), we can always change it," Vagnozzi said. "But I believe we are going to try to adopt it by the time the new council takes over so that they have guidelines to go by."

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