

Ensign enjoys lure of tropical Cuba

It's about 2,200 miles and a world away from Farmington Hills to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, but Jill Werschin seems to be having the time of her life.

At Gito, as the U.S. Navy calls it, Ensign Werschin is the dispersing officer for more than 2,000 Navy people living and working on the base.

"I asked to come to Gito because I had never been to the Caribbean. I love it here," she says.

"There are no traffic jams, we have clean air to breathe and the place has a friendly small-town atmosphere."

Ms. Werschin, 24, is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Werschin of Farmington Hills. She joined the Navy in January 1976 after graduating from Farmington High School and receiving a bachelor's degree in accounting from Lawrence Institute of Technology in Southfield.

Her home at present is a 45-square-mile piece of the southeastern shore of Cuba. The scenery includes palm trees, rocks, sand, cactus, iguanas, 17 miles of cyclone fence and an active

land minefield.

The latter characteristic is related to Guantanamo Bay's unique location. It is the only U.S. military base in a communist country.

The naval base was established shortly after the U.S. seized Guantanamo during the Spanish-American War in 1898. A treaty with the Cuban government in 1934 gave the U.S. a long term lease on Guantanamo.

Attempts by the Castro government, which assumed power in Cuba in 1959, to force the base off the island have been unsuccessful. All U.S. Navy personnel are confined to the base.

Ms. Werschin has been stationed at Guantanamo since January 1977. She is responsible for the payroll of the Navy's employees.

She has 12 Navy disbursing clerks and three civilian workers under her supervision in a community of 6,300 military people and civilians.

"Here in Gito, payday plays an important part in the high moral of our people," Ms. Werschin says.

According to her mother, Jill is

scheduled to leave Cuba on July 15 to

head for a Navy school in Georgia. In September, she'll be taking on a new assignment in Guam. Mrs. Werschin says her daughter writes home about twice a week and makes a long-distance phone call once in awhile.

"At \$3 a minute, you don't talk too long," says Mrs. Werschin. "But she loves it; she wouldn't trade it for anything."

THE NAVAL BASE in Cuba is used to train the crews aboard warships of the U.S. Atlantic Fleet. Nearly 100 ships a year complete the program.

From her officers' quarters atop a hill, Ms. Werschin can see the ships steaming out of the bay into the Caribbean Sea.

"For an outdoors sportsman, this is really ideal duty," she says. "We have fishing, snorkeling, scuba diving, tennis, horseback riding and swimming."

"Most of my free time is spent on outdoor sports such as swimming, scuba diving, tennis and bike riding. I

also enjoy needlepoint and reading."

There are, of course, disadvantages to such a living situation but Ms. Werschin looks on the bright side.

"Once you adjust to limited shopping opportunities and the idea of confinement to the base, Gito is a great place to be stationed," she says.

The base has a hospital, dental services, a color TV station, radio stations, a bowling center, several free movies daily, restaurants, a supermarket and two base retail stores.

Rest and relaxation flights are available to base residents who want to spend a weekend in Jamaica, Puerto Rico or Haiti. Passengers are charged a fee to cover fuel and maintenance expenses for the aircraft.

"I have visited Haiti and Jamaica on short R&R trips and plan to take a two-day trip to San Juan, Puerto Rico," says the ensign.



Jill Werschin, a Navy ensign stationed in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, stands among plants and flowers which grow on the island. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Werschin, 22511 Karen Court, Farmington Hills.

Houses should be inspected

(Continued from page 1A)

visor in the department's Lansing office, says the real estate agent is not generally responsible for problems with a home unless they were aware of the problems at the time of sale.

But, she said, the Cons may be on better ground because of the clause they inserted into their contract.

Miller says that if a home is inspected prior to sale, any violations will become a matter of record. "It's not perfect, but we try to help," he said of the inspection program.

"It puts the responsibility on the

owner.

The inspection lasts about two hours, he says, and the city wants two days' prior notice. The owner of the house must be present for the inspection.

"It's tremendous protection, as reasonably as you can get it," Miller says.

Wald also advises that homeowners check to be sure that contractors or anyone hired to work on the house are licensed.

Licensed contractors are licensed by the state and carry identification

cards.

"We stress to ask for the license," adds Miller. He will not recommend anyone, but suggests that anyone within the community has a reputation to keep and therefore makes a safer bet.

"Investigate the person you're dealing with."

And Mrs. Conn has her own way of getting it.

"If we're being ripped off, there's a lot of other people out there getting ripped off," she says. "I just think we were taken."

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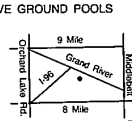


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