

Farmington Observer

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Hills woman shares a bond with hostages

By MARY GNIEWEK

Caroline Shearer shares a special bond with the 50 American hostages being held in Iran.

The Farmington Hills woman can relate to the trauma, the feeling of helplessness that those being held against their will in the American Embassy in Tehran must be feeling.

A survivor of a December 1975 plane crash in the Atlantic Ocean, she recalls being totally dependent on another person to keep her alive.

She remembers floating out to sea in 9-foot waves three miles off the coast of St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands. A woman who has "always hated the water and didn't even take a bathing suit to Puerto Rico," she didn't know how to swim.

"I don't think you can imagine what something like that feels like until you

'My personal trauma seems small by comparison. But I think of them so much. The idea of their being held against their will, at someone's mercy.'
— Caroline Shearer

go through it," she said.

"My personal trauma seems small by comparison (to that of hostages). But I think of them so much: the idea of their being held against their will, at someone's mercy.

"I PRAY for them each night."

Last Tuesday, Mrs. Shearer responded to President Carter's plea to Ameri-

cans to join in a "National Unity Day," flying an American flag in support of the hostages.

Mrs. Shearer and her daughter, Monique, 18, constructed a patriotic Christmas display. The large wood-based sign says "Peace on Earth" and holds a flag.

"I hope they're stronger than I was. I was really a coward," she said.

Mrs. Shearer recalls how she, her husband Raymond, and five other survivors were pulled out of the sea by a fisherman after an hour of floating in choppy waters.

"We were like toothpicks dropped into the ocean. There were sharks in the water.

"The pilot never let go of me for a minute. I had salt in my mouth. I kept going under. I just wanted to die."

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Cops nab pair in theft

Farmington Hills police have arrested two suspects in connection with two armed robberies which occurred in the city Dec. 9.

Arrested were Steven Michael Novak, 19, of Detroit and Michael Scott Reed, 18, of Southfield.

Both were charged with holding up Merchandise Mart, 27600 Eight Mile Road.

In addition, Reed was charged with armed robbery of the Maverick gas station at 29775 Grand River, Farmington.

Reed was arraigned before Judge Margaret Schaefer in 47th District Court Dec. 12 on the Merchandise Mart charge. He was released on \$20,000 personal bond.

He is currently being held in the Oakland County Jail on \$50,000 bond following his Dec. 14 arraignment on the Maverick robbery charge.

Novak was arraigned Dec. 19 before District Judge Michael Hand. He was released on \$2,500 bond.

Novak was also charged last week with armed robbery of the Diamond Boutique jewelry store in Farmington. No trial dates have been set.

According to Farmington Hills Detective Jim St. Louis, some money was recovered from the Merchandise Mart robbery, as well as the weapon allegedly used in both thefts.

According to police, the Maverick station was held up at 8:15 p.m. The

suspects escaped with \$138.

Merchandise Mart was hit at 8:50 p.m. Approximately \$500 in cash and credit cards were taken from the store.

"Investigation is pending for other suspects involved in these two cases," St. Louis said.

Final rush

Roy and Isabel Wolfe browse through stacks of record albums at Harmony House in the Downtown Farmington Center last Thursday. Like thousands of others in the metropolitan area, the Wolfes were searching for the last-minute Christmas gifts. To see how other shoppers faced the Yuletide crush in downtown Farmington, please turn to Page 3. (Staff photo by Randall Borst)



Monique Shearer, 18, and her mother, Mrs. Caroline Shearer, display their sentiments about the hostage situation in Iran in front of their Farmington Hills home. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)

City may purchase historic Warner house

By MARY GNIEWEK

The city of Farmington may purchase one of its best known historic buildings next year if it can acquire necessary funds.

The Warner mansion, 33805 Grand River, is expected to go on the real estate market by mid-1980.

The price hasn't been established yet but city officials estimate it will cost between \$200,000 and \$250,000.

Built in 1867, the stately white mansion with Victorian features was once the home of Michigan Gov. Fred M. Warner, who died in 1923.

The city might use the mansion as a museum or possibly move some administrative offices there, according to City Manager Robert Deadman.

"We've discussed possible uses with one architectural firm, but we've come to no conclusions whatsoever," he said.

William Slocum, Warner's grandson and a West Bloomfield attorney, will handle the sale. Slocum's mother, Edessa, who is Warner's daughter, lived in the mansion until earlier this year and still owns the building.

Slocum would be favorable to a purchase by the city.

"But it depends on the price," he said.

"I've talked to them (city administrators) on a preliminary basis, but we

haven't talked price. We might get together early next year.

"I'VE HAD A number of inquiries about the house through the years, but I have some concern with the historical significance of the place," he continued.

"I'll cooperate with the city. I think it has a lot of potential."

The city was prompted to look into purchasing the mansion by members of the Farmington Historical Commission.

"We sent a letter to the city manager asking him to investigate the possibility," said Nancy Leonard.

Mrs. Leonard, a historical commission member, told the Farmington City Council at a recent public hearing that it should consider spending 1980 community development funds for purchase of the mansion.

The federal government has allocated \$45,500 in bloc grant funds to the city for 1980-1981. That would still make the city responsible for a sizeable portion of the cost.

Issuance of bonds and application for government grant programs have been discussed.

"It would take an awful lot of persuasion to get money from the state," Deadman said.

"There's a question of whether we'd

be eligible. Most monies (from the State Historical Division of the Secretary of State Office) are used to restore historic structures.

"This one doesn't require restoration."

The city could apply next June for a

\$150,000 grant from the state, in which case funds would be allocated in December, 1980.

"BUT WE'RE talking in the neighborhood of \$200,000 or more when the house goes on the market," said Jerry

Horner, an aide to the city manager.

The state also requires the city to match funds on a 50-50 basis.

"We'd have to pay half from our city funds," Horner said.

"We need to come up with a use for

the building before we can go to voters and ask if we can use general fund money for this specific use."

The mansion is built on 2.74 acres which fronts Grand River across a 314-foot lot. The property juts back angularly to Oakland Avenue.



The Warner mansion on Grand River has long been a historic site in Farmington. It may be sold next year. The city has expressed an interest in buying and preserving the home. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)

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NEWSLINE 477-5450
CLASSIFIED LINE 591-0900

MEET THE THEATER

The Family Players begin an 8-part workshop for persons of all ages who want to be introduced to theater. The players are an unusual group, whose membership consists of entire families, working both on stage and back stage toward the next production. See 1-B.