

Heroine of Holocaust speaks of struggles

By CRAIG PIECHURA

A heroine during the Nazi Holocaust, Helena Chorazyczewski of Hamtramck held up a picture from her family album and pointed out her uncle to a room full of Southfield teachers.

"Here he looks so healthy," she said in understandably emotional tones. "My uncle, later they decapitate him."

Mrs. Chorazyczewski, 73, and her husband, Ignacy, 84, Catholic Poles who immigrated to the United States after the war, were invited to a teacher training seminar Wednesday to give instructors a first-hand account of their heroism during the war.

[Southfield teachers are conducting a course called "A Struggle for Human Dignity." The purpose of the course is

to inform students about the Holocaust, the Armenian Genocide, the American Indian struggle and the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II.

Two members of the Jewish organization Shari Haplavich (which translates as "Remnants of the Exiled") also were invited, along with four members of the Polish Association of Former Political Prisoners.

The Chorazyczewskis recently received a silver Medal of the Just from the Israeli government for their courageous actions under the occupation.

THE MEDAL bears the inscription "He who saves a single life saves the whole world" written in English and

Hebrew. It was issued by the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial.

The lives of four Jewish youngsters were saved through the efforts of the unassuming couple and three other Catholic farm families who risked their lives to save children of their Jewish neighbors.

They hid three Jewish teenagers in a bunker on their farm and kept 9-year-old Abraham Kasztan, "with the cow in the stall."

"Abie," as Mrs. Chorazyczewski still calls Kasztan, and the other three boys never forgot the favor. Kasztan invited his surrogate parents to weddings and bar mitzvahs in Washington D.C.

Letters in Hebrew were sent to the couple by another boy they hid. Mrs. Chorazyczewski took those letters to a Jewish shopkeeper in Hamtramck, David Silver, to translate the message.

It was Silver, whose parents and four

sisters were killed by the Nazis, who began the effort to recognize the unsung couple who risked their lives harboring Jewish youngsters.

THE PAINFUL memories and all the attention brought a blush to Mrs. Chorazyczewski's face. At times, John Mames of Southfield and Martin Waters, members of the Jewish organization, translated for her when she couldn't express herself in English.

But she gave one teacher an eloquent answer when asked why she risked her own life to help the Jewish boys.

She said her own mother died when she was six months old.

"I so poor. I thinking my stepmother no good. I say God help me when I grow up. Nobody will I not help. Keep your help for somebody who have hard life. . . (It's) all one God.

"No matter what nationality, I like

all people. When somebody come to my house, God come to my house and I rich."

At that point Mrs. Chorazyczewski broke into tears and thanked her husband for being with her all those years. A quiet man, Mr. Chorazyczewski was so moved he had to remove his thick, dark glasses to wipe away tears.

She then proceeded to kiss Mames and Waters and Sr. Carol Rittner, instructor at Mercy College, and advisor to the Holocaust seminar.

Mrs. Chorazyczewski told everyone she was sorry she talked so long. She apologized profusely for keeping them from dinner.

TEACHERS begged her to continue.

The condition that caused tears to well up in Mr. Chorazyczewski's eyes quickly became contagious.

"Very heavy stuff," said one teacher after the presentation.

Waters commended the school district for exploring, exposing and explaining inhumanity with the course.

The most prevalent question high school students keep asking me is "Can

this happen in our country?" Waters said.

"The answer is 'Yes.' Germany was a highly civilized nation with technological advances, poets and composers. In America, in the '50s, we had Joe McCarthy, a bigot, who made quite an impact."

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Diamond Boutique is robbed — again

By MARY GNIEWEK

For the third time in seven months, the Diamond Boutique jewelry store in Farmington was the target of thieves, who escaped early Wednesday morning with \$70,000 worth of jewelry.

The latest break-in at the store at 37105 Grand River occurred just before 3 a.m. Wednesday, according to Farmington police.

Farmington and Farmington Hills patrol units arrived at the store in the Kmart shopping plaza just one minute after the alarm sounded at 2:59 a.m.

They found the front door smashed and a cinder block lying inside the store on the floor. Eight display cases and one wall case had been broken, according to Farmington Police Lt. John Santomauro.

Police have no suspects or descriptions of possible suspects at this time.

The latest robbery brings the tally to more than \$200,000 worth of

stolen merchandise taken from the store since August 1979.

On Aug. 3, the Diamond Boutique was the site of a \$100,000 armed robbery. All three suspects sought by police in that heist were subsequently arrested and a portion of the missing jewelry was recovered.

Then on Dec. 11, two armed intruders robbed the store shortly before closing time and escaped with \$50,000 worth of jewels.

JUST A WEEK later, Farmington police arrested two suspects, Steven Novak of Detroit and Kenneth Maxwell of Southfield, and recovered a portion of the jewelry in raids on two houses in Detroit and Southfield.

In both of the previous robberies, phone calls by anonymous tipsters led police to the arrest of all of the suspects.

The Diamond Boutique is not insured against theft, carrying only a liability insurance for customers.

Farmington Hills entertainer to perform in benefit show

Carol Maurer of Farmington Hills will appear in a special benefit concert at Detroit's Orchestra Hall on Friday, Feb. 8, in honor of the University of Michigan School of Music Centennial.

Miss Maurer is a member of the aMazin' Blues, a show choir sponsored by the U of M Alumni Association. The group of 16 singers and dancers, along with three instrumentalists, will perform with the Michigan Jazz Band, the Women's Glee Club and the Men's Glee Club at the Pops Concert at 8 p.m.

Proceeds from the concert and from the special performance of Passion According to St. Matthew performed by the University Chamber choir and Special Chamber Orchestra on Feb. 10 at 3 p.m. will go to the U of M School of Music and the restoration of Orchestra Hall.

Orchestra Hall is listed on the National Registry of Historic Places.

Miss Maurer is a senior in the school of music majoring in music education.

Ticket information may be obtained by calling the Orchestra Hall box office at 633-3700.



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