

Warner time

Panel wants more to learn about former governor

BY TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER

For years, the Warner Mansion has sometimes been a forgotten landmark in Farmington. Many people drive past the tired old white building on Grand River, without realizing they are passing one of the area's truly historic gems.

But 1998 could begin a long overdue effort to familiarize people with the mansion-turned-museum. Leading the way in Farmington historian Dick Carvell and other members of the recently formed Farmington Historical Museum Development Committee.

"The (committee's) mission is to bring down to enhancing, maintaining and hopefully coming up with fundraising ideas to support the museum," said Carvell, about the committee, which was formed in September and which will again meet on Jan. 14. "Maybe we can get more publicity. Surprisingly, for the people who have lived in Farmington Hills all of their life, they don't know about it."

Committee co-chair Edwina Eggleston agreed.

"I don't think we've touted that horn loud enough," Eggleston said. "And that's what this committee's all about."

According to Carvell, the resi-

dence of former Michigan Gov. Fred Warner, built in the Civil War era - will probably always be maintained "as a museum, a place where Farmington's history can be gathered and exhibited." That is, as long as it remains property of the city of Farmington.

But what the committee is now brainstorming about is how to otherwise use the mansion at 33895 Grand River - while at the same time ensuring long-term economic viability.

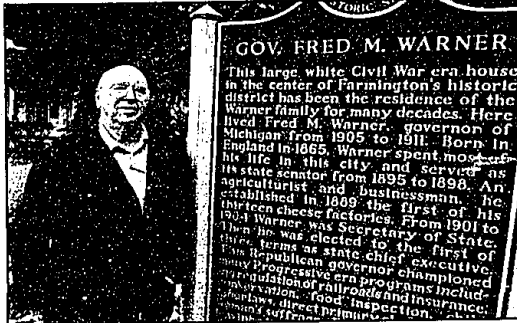
Farmington City Manager Frank Lauhoff said annual operating costs for the museum and grounds has typically been \$20,000-to-\$30,000 above what the city has allocated.

The committee is expected to still present a formal recommendation to the Farmington City Council in April, despite the Dec. 10 meeting being canceled by a snowstorm.

"We think we will make wonderful progress," said Eggleston, who co-chairs the committee with Valerie McNece. "We also, as a group, want to keep the momentum going."

Eggleston said the eventual recommendation will probably include a museum name change. That suggestion, she added, will try to "incorporate the story" of both Farmington and Farmington Hills, and not be solely connected to Gov. Warner, who was the state's chief executive from 1905-11.

She said a decision about the name could be reached at the Jan. 14 meeting. Other suggestions are being tossed into the hopper by committee members.



Proud promoter: Dick Carvell and members of the new Farmington Historical Museum Development Committee want people to know about one of the city's most-treasured gems, the Warner Mansion.

"Some of the things being proposed are either slide presentations, videos or a speaker's bureau," Carvell said. "Something to get the story out. And somehow, we've got to market it better."

Expanded hours could also bring in new patrons, Carvell said. "Things have changed. People's habits have changed. The availability of time has changed."

Also being discussed is the possibility of better coordination of curriculum in the Farmington Public School District so that students would have more in-depth understanding of the Warner story before stepping into the museum.

Third graders in the district currently take regular field trips to the historical landmark. The mansion was donated to the city for educational purposes in 1980 and is operated by the Farmington Historical Commission.

Eggleston said one committee member suggested doing more things "that reflect the history of the 1900s."

Those include classes about gardens, plants and flowers that were prevalent during the mid-to-late 1800s, when the Warner mansion was built.

Whatever evolves out of the committee meetings is considered by Eggleston to be an exciting breakthrough.

"All of the people that are aware of the museum want to keep it flourishing," Eggleston said. "But we want to move into the future, while keeping the beautiful memories of the past."

"It's a beautiful piece. Our history is as important as our future. We're so high-tech today. It'd be wonderful to keep in mind the beautiful past we have."

Additional revenue from museum-related programs and offerings would help pay volunteers to handle tours and maintain the aging structure.

"It's hard to convince people there's a need because it looks so darn good," Carvell said. Recent building improvements included putting new roofing over a portion of the facility last year and replacing rotted-out wooden porch pillars, a project Carvell said will continue after the winter.

After that, a new heating system would likely need to be installed, he added.

OBITUARIES

WILLIAM "TINY" RENEE

William "Tiny" Renee, 66, died Dec. 8, 1997 in Bradenton, Fla. Mr. Renee was born in Oakdale, Pa. on Jan. 16, 1931. He worked for the United States Postal Service in Farmington as a letter carrier and clerk serving as local union president and president of the Michigan State Association of Letter Carriers. He enjoyed working with children and was one of the original founders and coaches of the Farmington Junior Football Association "Rocket" Little League Program staying active in coaching and directing for the next 18 years. Tiny enjoyed his retirement, living in Bradenton, Fla., where the focus of his life was his 11 grandchildren.

He is survived by wife, Donna; six children, Shelley Renee of Sarasota, Fla., Randall (Laurie) of Portage, Kevin (Wendy) of Willow, Ala., Patrick of Kenosha, Wis., Scott Renee of Sarasota, Fla. and Anita (Todd) McCreery of Sarasota, Fla.; and 11 grandchildren.

Memorial contributions can be sent to the Farmington Rocket Little League Football Program or the American Heart Association.

ISAAC PAUL TESORERO

Isaac Paul Tesorero, 74, died Dec. 25 in his Farmington home. Born in Mexico City, Mexico, Mr. Tesorero had lived in Farmington since 1961. He received a bachelor's degree from Georgetown University in 1949 and his master's from the University of Michigan in 1950.

Mr. Tesorero was an assistant vice-president in the International Division at National Bank of Detroit until 1975 and deputy director, international division for the Michigan Department of Commerce until his retirement in 1993. While employed by the Michigan Department of Commerce he also was the acting director of the Detroit Regional Office and Administration of the

Governor's Export Development Authority.

Mr. Tesorero served in the U.S. Navy during WWII and was a member of numerous professional and civic organizations, including the Detroit Committee on Foreign Relations, the Economic Club of Detroit, the National Association of Business Economists, the Meadowbrook Country Club, the Detroit Athletic Club and the International Institute. His other interests were music, drawing, traveling, reading, public speaking and writing.

He is survived by brother, Abraham, Jr. of Farmington Hills; and sisters, Soledad Biggs of Farmington, Margaret Katze of Venice, Fla. and Elvira Micallef of Livonia.

Funeral services were Dec. 29 at St. Gerald Catholic Church in Farmington. Arrangements made by Thayer-Rock Funeral Home in Farmington.

Memorial contributions can be sent to the Karmans Cancer Institute, 41935 W. 12 Mile Rd., Novi 48377-9939.

DOROTHY J. NETTLETON

Dorothy J. Nettleton, 64, died Dec. 27 at Harper Hospital in Detroit.

A resident of Farmington Hills since 1961, Ms. Nettleton was a clerk for Cuna Mutual Insurance Company in Bingham Farms.

She is survived by daughters, Marie (Michael) Rupert of Brighton, Cathy (Jerry) Kane of Livonia, Shirley Nettleton of Livonia and Nancy Nettleton of Farmington Hills; and five grandchildren.

Funeral services were held Dec. 31 at Thayer-Rock Funeral Home in Farmington with the Rev. Leonard Partensky officiating.

Memorial contributions can be sent to the American Diabetes Association, 30600 Telegraph, Suite 2255, Bingham Farms 48025-4532.

Community chorus to hold auditions

The Farmington/Farmington Hills Community Chorus will be holding auditions for its Spring Session at 7:30 p.m. Jan. 6 and 13 at the Farmington Hills Activity Center, 11 Mile Road just east of Middlebelt Road.

The chorus performs two major shows each year, a holiday concert and a spring concert as well as singing at the Farmington Founders Festival and at Heritage Park.

Musical experience is not necessary but is helpful.

All sheet music and a practice taped is provided.

Contact: Chorus Manager, Kathy Hall at 471-4516 for more details.



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