

Solons Ponder Relief For Victims of Crime

HARRISBURG, -- of a law violator, and rightly so, but not a cent is ever expended on the innocent

crime victim who may be saddled with enormous medical bills or other losses."

That's how State Rep. Milton Berkes of Bucks County explains the reasoning behind the growing movement for some form of assistance for crime victims. The movement is nationwide, involves legislation at the Federal and state levels and has so far resulted in adoption of Crime Victims' Compensation Acts in seven states - New York, New Jersey, Nevada, Maryland, California, Massachusetts and Hawaii.

Here in Pennsylvania no fewer than eight bills have been introduced in the current session of the legislature to set up a system of payments to crime victims. The measures all follow the premise that persons who are the innocent victims of crimes should receive assistance, but they differ on precisely which crimes would be covered, the amounts to be paid out, the administration of the program and other details.

Prime sponsor of one of the bills, Berkes says his interest in the problem

stemmed from the experience of one of his constituents, a young woman who was assaulted outside her home in 1970.

"The poor girl suffered serious head injuries and has been in and out of hospitals ever since. Her family has spent thousands on costly therapy, and she has been unable to work full time because of her injuries."

In the meantime, Berkes said, her assailant has undergone 12 months of rehabilitation "and has received all kinds of government help in reshaping his life."

"It seems we pay an awful lot of attention to people who perpetrate crimes, but do absolutely nothing to help their victims," Berkes comments.

Under Berkes' bill, a person who suffered physical injury at the hands of a criminal could file a claim for compensation within 90 days of the incident.

The bill proposes to set up a three-member Crime Victim's Compensation Board which would rule on all claims. If the board decided the claim was valid, the person could be paid all of his expenses up to \$15,000.

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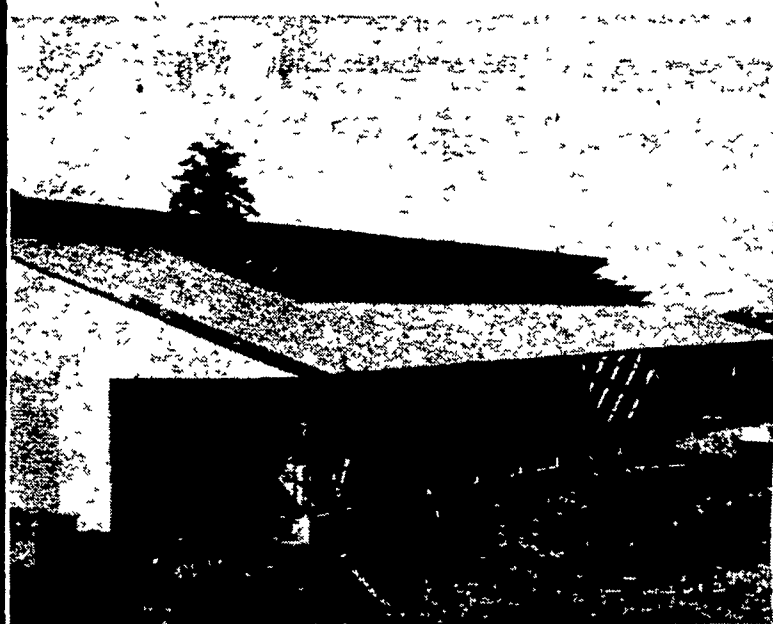
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Dawn Marie Boley, Lancaster County's 1974 Easter Seal Child, admires the first painting donated for this year's benefit art auction for the Lancaster County Easter Seal Society. Shown presenting the original water color work is artist-donor William F. Early, 1435 Sunset Drive, Lancaster. The art auction, scheduled to be held at Park City April 6, is sponsored by the Lancaster County Art Association to aid the local Easter Seal Rehabilitation Center in providing services to Lancaster County's handicapped children and adults.

Farmer Association Plans Spring Meet

Lancaster County Farmers Association will hold a spring dinner meal on April 4, 7 p.m., at the Good 'N

Plenty Restaurant.

A business meeting will also be held at this time, concerning state and national legislative tours, and proposed changes in the by-laws. There will also be a program entitled "Seasons in the Sun", a three screen slide presentation, showing the real image of today's farmer. Mrs. Paul McPhearson, York County Farmers Association, will be presenting this program and pointing out the farmers point of view to urban consumers.

In order to qualify for an award, the person filing the claim must show losses of at least \$100 or two weeks' earnings, and the person must not be responsible, in any way, for the act which resulted in his injury.

Awards would be made either to the victim himself, a surviving child or spouse of a person who died as a result of the crime, or any other person who was dependent on the crime victim for his principal support.

Tickets for the spring dinner meeting are \$4. The deadline is March 28 for any member of the board.

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