

Lifes' a trip for Greenlees

By Alison Wingblad
special writer

It seems that, from the beginning, the odds were against Harry Greenlee ever making it.

After all, his childhood was wrought with severe challenges: the untimely death of his mother and subsequent abandonment of his father, living hand-to-mouth for years, struggling by way of an odd job here or there whenever one could be had, and with little or no support from relatives or friends.

Indeed, Harry Greenlee could very well have been overcome by his troubles in any of a number of ways.

But, instead, he came out swinging, meeting those challenges head-on with a passion for life, a strong sense of self and an unwavering respect for all that is wholesome and true.

And it's this steadfastness which has sustained him for the better part of his 69 years.

Greenlee and his wife, Helen, also 69, who recently celebrated 67 years of marriage, have many a story to tell of their life journeys thus far. They've settled into Farmington for the past six years as active members of the community, giving of themselves and pushing themselves beyond the limits of most others their age.

FOR INSTANCE, who would expect someone who is just months shy of his 70th birthday to regularly write several letters each week to the homebound and ill throughout the area? Well, that's but a given as far as Greenlee is concerned.

"I feel for those people that I write to, I really do, because some of them are older people who otherwise would never get any letters and have no one visiting them. I feel for them because that is a loneliness worse than all others. There's no end to it and no answer for it. It just breaks their lives up," he says.

Greenlee's philosophy on life, which keeps him upbeat and pro-

know your neighbor

ductive, is based on a simple adage: "We grow old and lonesome when we outlive our talents."

Ane he surely has yet to let himself, his attitudes and his ideas lag behind.

"Everyone has talents; it's just that some people never discover them or find out too late what those talents might be. You have to be willing to stick your neck out sometimes and have some confidence in yourself," he said.

Greenlee certainly has had no trouble developing his skills and talents. Though he retired nearly 30 years from an engineering career at Chrysler Corp., Greenlee continues to this day inventing and designing mechanical components and the like. He claims to have hundreds of patents on file and plans to resubmit others in the near future.

THOSE ARE unarguably high achievements, but especially so for someone like Harry Greenlee. His wife, Helen, said he has but six weeks of formal technical schooling.

"I've always been somebody who likes a problem. If someone would say something couldn't be done, well, I'm the type to say that I could do it. And then I had to be able to do it after all that," he said.

"I have to be doing something all the time if I'm awake. I'm a creative person. If something pops into my head, I have to go with it."

Of course, that's not to say that Greenlee leaves no time for recreation in his life. An accomplished artist who has won awards for several oil paintings, Greenlee is also the author to a collection of unpublished short stories and poems.

He also finds tremendous enjoyment as a member of the Farmington-based Wing Dingers bowling league, which meets weekly at Country Lanes on Nine Mile Road.



Harry and Helen Greenlee, married 67 years, walk hand in hand near their Farmington apartment.

"It (bowling) keeps you accurate and thinking. You sit in a chair all day and it's like being in bed," he said, adding that he walks two miles everyday, weather permitting.

So what is it like living with someone like Harry Greenlee? His wife, Helen, said their life together is "very pleasant" and that they do whatever they are capable of doing with the gifts they have.

AS FOR HELEN, that can mean spending many a day crocheting lap blankets for the sick and elderly as well as keeping active in their church. And, of course, she keeps Harry happy at home — both claim they've never really had a quarrel with each other in all their years of marriage.

"It all has to do with respect for each other and love," said Helen. "And we always make the best of whatever life gives us."

It's that very attitude that has kept their marriage so strong for close to 70 years, added Greenlee.

"Whenever Helen and I find ourselves in a spot, we work it out together... she's a great gal. She stayed right with me, and we made it," he said.

And chances are, they'll keep on making it. Greenlee and Helen have strong ties with their two daughters, four grandchildren and various great- and great-great grandchildren and consider them their mainstay.

"Of course, family is very, very important to us, and ours is just beautiful," said Greenlee.

No wonder.

Residents, Edison to discuss outages

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(If Tuesday's meeting) will be the citizens' concerns raised at the special meeting of Sept. 4," Vermeulen wrote. "Actually we're looking forward to this meeting of Nov. 26. We're confident this committee can help us improve our service to the community."

But Vermeulen also asked for help. He asked that the city council reconsider the Edison's tree replacement plan. "I'm sure that working together we can create a program that will not only protect our lines but also upgrade the city's tree population."

Vermeulen's second request for help is Edison's need to extend a 12,000 volt line from 12 Mile and Drake to 11 Mile and Inkster. Edison wants the route operational by March, 1993.

"With the help of your city administration we are making progress in our negotiations with Oakland Community College," Vermeulen wrote. "But the route is not fully defined and no matter what route is ultimately chosen, there will be opposition."

Hills church sets concert

The First Church of God in Farmington Hills will host a concert Sunday, Dec. 8, at 11 a.m. featuring Ron and Carolyn Patti.

Carolyn is a concert pianist and Ron's vocal abilities include a four-octave range. They are also the parents of Gospel Music's award-winning Sandi Patti.

Their music has been played internationally on radio, television and recordings. While singing tenor for Fred Warlick's Pennsylvania Ron appeared at the White House for a special Command Performance in honor of a visit from Queen Elizabeth of England.

Using their own vocal and instrumental arrangements in both live and taped accompaniment, Ron and Carolyn combine their musical and creative talents to inspire those who hear them.

There is no admission charge. A free-will offering will be received at the close of the service. First Church of God is at 25717 Power Road. Phone 477-9144 for further information.

Rainbow agency has open house

The Rainbow Connection, a non-profit corporation which grants the wishes of children with life-threatening illnesses, is holding a Rainbow Connection Holiday Open House.

The open house will be held Monday, Dec. 2, at the Rainbow Connection office, 208 East Street, downtown Rochester, between Third and Fourth streets, one block east of Main Street from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m.

The public is invited to visit the offices, enjoy refreshments throughout the day, meet the executive director, Suzanne Jones, the board of directors, new volunteer auxiliary board members and the many hard-working office volunteers. Visit the Rainbow Connection Christmas Corner where visitors can purchase the First Edition cookbook, "Dishes for Wishes," Christmas cards and the First Edition Christmas ornament.

Celebrate Lagniappe and the holiday spirit with the Rainbow Connection by visiting the offices — where wishes do come true.

For additional information, call (313) 651-1261.

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