

## Bridging generations

### Farmington scout earns Eagle Award with help from friend

By PEZGY CASTINE  
SPECIAL WRITER

Karl Hinbern, 17, needed help. The Farmington resident was ready to earn his Eagle Award, the highest honor in Boy Scouting, and he needed the right project that would allow him to demonstrate the leadership abilities he had learned in 10 years of scouting.

Lee Struble, 86, also needed help. A resident of Marian Oakland West senior residence on 10 Mile in Farmington Hills, Struble could no longer plant the glorious vegetable garden he started behind the residence five years ago, one that kept the home's kitchen filled with fresh vegetables.

Luckily, the two came together. And what emerged was a story of friendship, commitment and how a community should work.

It began in early 1998. Hinbern, then a sophomore at University of Detroit Jesuit High School, began looking for just the right kind of project that would bring him his lifelong dream, the prestigious Eagle Scout Award.

Not just any project would do. "An Eagle project needs to be about leadership," said Mike Brady of Farmington Hills, Karl's Scoutmaster at Troop 110, based at Our Lady of Sorrows.

"A scout needs to be organizing the labor of others for the benefit of a worthy recipient."

Someone recommended he check with Marian Oakland West. A staff member showed Karl the garden in back. "It was early spring and frost was still on this big plot of dirt," one that measured 600 feet by 60 feet, Karl recalled. "Then they introduced me to Mr. Struble. They told him I wanted a project to earn my Eagle Scout. And he threw on his hat and grabbed his coat faster than you could blink, and we went out to the garden."



Partners: Lee Struble and Karl Hinbern in their bountiful garden.

#### Avid gardener

Earlier that year, Struble had encountered health problems that were going to limit his gardening. Before he was always able to manage the prized lot himself. It had won an award from the Farmington Hills C.R. Den Club a year earlier.

"As a former chief industrial engineer, I found if you don't have equipment, you couldn't do the job," Struble said. "But I have all the equipment."

He also had the knowledge. Born and raised on an 800-acre farm in North Dakota, Struble knew how to get things to grow. First, Karl had to win approval for his project from the Eagle Committee. "People really liked the idea. The vegetables went to feeding the senior citizens who lived there, and the project could be continued by the troop in the future as a service project."

After formulating his plan, Karl began what he called "my conquest of gifts." His first visits to area nurseries asking for plant donations ended in disappointment, but then several came through with flats of tomatoes and other vegetables. Meijer gave him a \$75 coupon, with which he purchased seven flats, including peppers, cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower and eggplant. Then he used a gift certificate

Struble had won for his garden award to buy what also was needed at English Gardens.

#### Down to work

Next the heavy labor began. While Struble instructed him, Karl began cleaning out the plot and dragging most of the dead material back to a compost pile. "That's part of the reason I went over there, to help him out," said Karl. "He couldn't do much heavy work."

Eventually came two big days in May when Karl would direct his volunteers - under Struble's watchful eye - on the actual planting. "I had planned that we'd be working from 9 to 3 on a Saturday and 9:30 to 2 on a Sunday, but we actually finished it all on Saturday because so many people showed up," Karl said. "I called 10 people with hopes of six or seven showing up, and those six or seven brought their friends and families."

Karl directed his labor force, took pictures and made entries in a journal. His involvement didn't end when the plants were in the ground. He would return almost every week, often with his younger brother, Billy, to weed the garden and bring in the harvest. And what a harvest: cabbage, beets, turnips, squash, radishes, watermelon, eggplant, carrots, peppers, tomatoes, multicolored gourds, cucumbers and

zucchini. Struble had the numbers: 4,000 green onions, 10 bushels of green peppers and 20 bushels of carrots, not to mention 17 different kinds of sunflowers.

The harvest was enjoyed by the residents and by the Hinbern family. "We ate a lot of them raw, which is perfect in summer," said Jan Hinbern, Karl's mother.

#### Friendship blooms

Something else grew and was harvested, too: a special relationship between Karl and Struble. Sometimes, it would just be the two of them tending the garden. Sometimes they would just sit under a tree and talk.

"I felt very honored to assist Karl, who I think is an all-American boy, in gaining his Eagle Scout honor," Struble said. "Karl did a very good job in following my instructions as to the institution of the garden, harvesting and that sort of thing. He is an example, I think, of youth today."

"I just wanted to spend time with him," Karl said. "He's a great individual to be around. Sometimes I'd go there just to be around him, not the garden. I love talking to him."

The project was a great success.

"I thought he carried it out very well," said Brady. "Karl's task was to be guided by Mr. Struble, who knew what had to be done but was not able to do it. He had to know that his task was to organize his labor force and put them there. And he did."

On Nov. 1, 1998, Karl became an Eagle Scout, joining an elite group that includes presidents, astronauts and others, many of whom sent letters of congratulations that Karl compiled in a scrapbook.

Now it's spring once again. On the last weekend in March, Karl talked to Struble about coming with other members of Troop 110 to bring the plot behind his residence back to life.

"You couldn't ask for a better young man," Struble said.

## WEDDINGS & ENGAGEMENTS



**CZYRKA-SEMPERGER**  
Amy Marie Semperger and Stephen Louis Czyrka were married Oct. 10 at St. Edith Catholic Church in Livonia.

The bride is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William Semperger of Clarkston, formerly of Farmington Hills. The groom is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Bruno Czyrka of Grand Ledge.

The bride is a 1995 graduate of Wayne State University. She is employed by NCR Corporation as an account manager.

The groom is a graduate of Ferris State University. He is employed by Computware Corporation as a product coordinator.

The couple received guests at a reception at Laurel Manor in Livonia before leaving on a honeymoon trip to the southern Caribbean islands. They are making their home in Livonia.

**ADAMS-ROCCO**  
Wendell and Linda Hippler of Dearborn Heights announce the engagement of their daughter, Lana Michelle Adams of Farmington Hills, to Daniel Jacob Rocco, son of James and Barbara Rocco of Jackson, Mich.

The bride-elect is a 1987 graduate of Robichaud High School in Dearborn Heights. She earned two associate's degrees from Henry Ford Community College in accounting and business. She is employed as general manager of Advantis in Novi, an executive business center.

Her fiancé is a member of the professional staff at Computware Corp. and is a 1992 graduate of Central Michigan University.



He is also a 1988 graduate of Jackson High School.

An August wedding is planned at Queen of the Miraculous Medal Church in Jackson.



**KIRSTEN-MALISOW**  
Robert and Sara Kirsten of Farmington Hills announce the

engagement of their daughter, Katherine, to Arthur Malisow of Midland, the son of Alan and Ellen Malisow of Southfield.

The bride-to-be has a bachelor's degree in business administration from Michigan State University. She is an account manager for Productions Plus in Birmingham.

Her fiancé has a bachelor of arts degree in history from the University of Michigan and a law degree from the Detroit College of Law at MSU. He is employed as an estate planning attorney with Robert E. Bourne in Midland.

A July wedding is planned.

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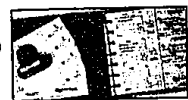
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