

Scouts from page A1

Julie Barber and Karen Berger more than 650 hours to complete. The girls chose the project as the final step toward earning their Gold Awards, Girl Scouting's highest honor.

After more than 10 years of earning badges, why did they choose to tackle such a challenge?

"It was a good way to finish off Girl Scouting," Berger said after a brief ceremony at Hills Fire Station No. 6. "It's a great award, and it's nationally recognized."

Barber agreed, explaining she got interested in firefighting as a career after attending a National Leadership Conference with members of Explorer Post 28, Clinton Valley Boy Scout Council. "That's why the project seemed interesting."

It also proved a little frustrating. After getting their plans approved through the Michigan Metro Girl Scout Council, the girls trooped over to Farmington

Hills City Hall in search of a map they could enlarge and detail.

There was just one problem. "We didn't expect the maps to be so out of date," Berger said. "A lot of things, like apartments and condos, weren't on there."

After spending a lot of time in the Planning Department and touring the city, the girls finally produced their first draft. They found a company that could take a photograph of the original, make the changes and then enlarge the image.

But the complications seemed endless.

"We made all the corrections, we'd bring it back, and there would be something else," Berger explained.

Firefighter Dave Feichtner helped the girls with the detail work, like rounding up firefighters to proofread the maps. They also put in some additional landmarks on the section maps.

"It was a lot of work," he said.

"But up until now, only a couple of stations had good maps."

From the time the project started - just after the girls' sophomore year - it began to grow. From the Bergers' basement up into the dining room, Karen's mother, Leah, said the long, tedious process had to be worked into the girls' already busy schedules.

Persistence pays off

Both maintained high grade point averages at Harrison High School and got involved in sports and music programs. They put in about 30 hours a week during the fall, as members of the Harrison High Marching Band.

"I think they had the idea that it would just go perfectly," Leah said. "It was a long and tedious project, and both girls had an awful lot of things going on at the time."

Both Leah and Julie's mother, Fern, saw growth in their daughters throughout the two-year project.

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"Her persistence was amazing," Fern said of Julie. "At all times, they wanted to be so accurate. They would drive out in their cars to see if certain streets were really there."

In addition to the map-making skills, the girls often took leadership roles as their friends pitched in to help. They learned to solve problems creatively, and had to take initiative in contacting city officials and local businesses to make the project go, Leah added.

The girls have taken the skills and talents they've acquired to college. Karen at Vanderbilt University's Blair School of Music and Julie at the University of Michigan's College of Language, Science and Arts. Finishing the map project has left them with something in short supply as they slugged through their senior years - free time.

More importantly, it has left them with a sense of accomplishment and having done something important for their community.

"It's nice to see the maps being used the way we'd hoped," Karen said.

Dem caucus Saturday

By JON BARNETT
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Though Super Tuesday primaries have crowned Vice President Al Gore as the Democratic Presidential nominee, area Democrats shouldn't shy away from Saturday's political caucuses.

"If there's perceived to be no race left, probably the turnout will be very low, which is unfortunate, because there's a lot more that happens at the caucus," acknowledged Farmington Hills chair Vicki Barnett.

In addition to casting the presidential vote, those who attend will hear speakers on a variety of issues—everything from "home rules" to state-issued vouchers to off-set the

cost of private school tuition.

Barnett said participants will likely have a chance to sign onto the petition drive to get a Constitutional amendment that would require a "super majority" of legislative votes on any issue that involves the authority of local governments. They'll also get a chance to meet and interact with area government and political leaders, she added.

The caucus will be held at Farmington Hills City Hall, Orchard Lake at 11 Mile roads, beginning at 10 a.m. Registration begins at 9 a.m.

There will not be a Democratic caucus in Farmington Hills. Residents in that city should go to the Hills caucus site, said Janice Schmidt of the clerk's office.

City offices to close down March 17

Farmington City Hall will be closed from noon to 4:30 p.m. Friday, March 17, to allow for

offices to be refurbished. The facility will re-open on Monday, March 20.

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