

# Eagles

(continued from page 1)

21 merit badges, 11 of them required. The boys must serve in different leadership positions, and do community service in addition to their Eagle Scout projects. A Boy Scout moves through several ranks, including Basic, Tenderfoot, Star and Life ranks. Eagle is the fifth and highest. Once a scout turns 18, he becomes an adult member and cannot earn more ranks. Adults can become assistant scoutmasters, or scoutmasters after they've gained more experience.

The troops each scout belongs to vary in size. Blaine and Honeywell belong to Troop 693, and Sikora and McMahon belong to Troop 444. Both of these troops have between 20 and 25 members. Kowalek is a member of Troop 281, which has almost 90 members. Troop 693 was organized in 1993, and half of the original six members are now Eagle Scouts. Schmitt was a member of Troop 261 in Germany when he completed his Eagle Scout project, which had 20 members.

The boys usually acted as supervisors and planners, although they weren't afraid to do work themselves. The younger scouts earn credit for doing the footwork of the Eagle Scout project.

Here is a summary of each scout's project:

Brian Sikora turned an old building at Rickett's Glen State Park into a rescue station. He saw an article in a newspaper about the park needing help, visited the park, and chose the rescue station project. "I thought it would have the impact," he says. He and Troop 444 cleaned around the building and painted it both inside and out. They built a wall and door inside, creating a new room. He also made the windows more secure and sound-proofed one of the rooms. The park wanted to install radios and other equipment, and needed a quiet secure building. "It turned out really nice," says Sikora. "They were pleased and excited."

Matt McMahon's project involved building a small picnic area at the Jackson Township park. "I lived about 10 minutes from the park," he says. Between the personal time he spent developing the plans and the troop time building the benches and houses, the project took about 200 hours. McMahon researched local birds to know which houses to build, and he also wrote letters to local companies asking for donations. The picnic area allows easy viewing of the fields, which Back Mountain Soccer uses as one of their areas.

Jacob Schmitt made a walking path during his time in Germany. He and Troop 261 made five 5-mile trail in Trabitz, Germany. They built three benches, and repaired and replaced signs and tree markers. "The town was enthusiastic," he says. His father worked for the government, and Schmitt lived in Germany for four years. His family moved to several different communities in our area, and Schmitt stayed involved with Scouting by joining each local troop.

Ray Honeywell's project was more personal. He found and restored the bell at the Ruggles United Methodist Church. "My grandparents on my father's side were the last to be married at the old church, and my grandparents

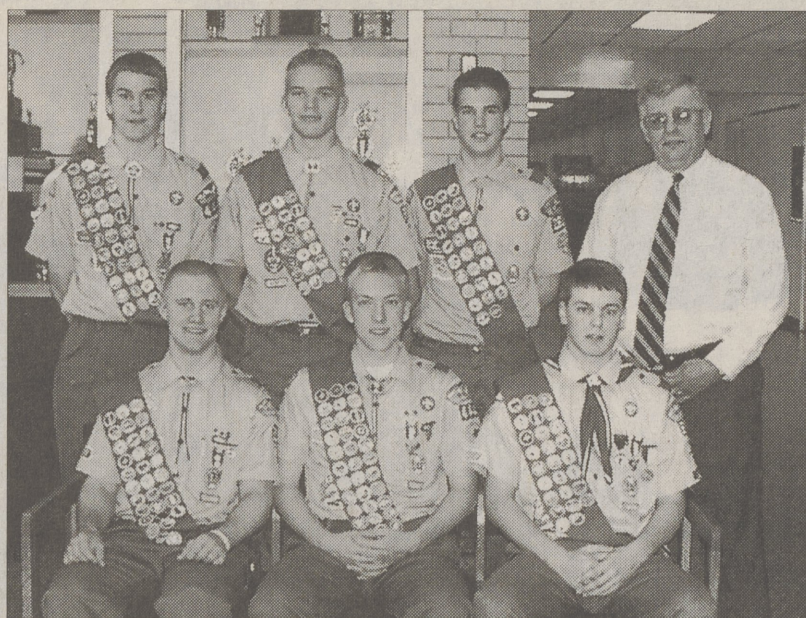
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POST PHOTO/BILL GOODMAN

**Six Eagle Scouts** will graduate from Lake-Lehman High School this June. From left, seated: Dave Kowalek, Matt McMahon, Ray Honeywell. Standing: Brian Sikora, Rick Blaine, Jacob Schmitt, John Oliver, principal.

on my mother's side were the first couple to be married at the new church." The bell of the church was forgotten in a barn two miles from the church, for almost 50 years. He and Troop 693 built a new foundation for the bell, and sandblasted it back to health. The one 125-year-old bell is now displayed near the entrance to the church.

Rick Blaine's project involved moving and restoring a pavilion for the Maple Grove United Methodist church in Sweet Valley. "The original plan was to move the pavilion in one piece. Because of the condition, the pavilion had to be moved in pieces. The boys started by removing the roof, then the trusses. They found the new place and rebuilt the pavilion in the opposite order. "I've received a lot of thanks because nobody wanted to see it torn down." The project started in January of 1998 and continued into the spring. "It was challenging to find work parties, especially in the snow," says Blaine. "It was well worth it." Members use the pavilion every Sunday. The project took about 910 hours.

David Kowalek built a sanctuary for bluebirds at the Bear Creek Lutheran Camp, a summer camp

Church. Kowalek originally planned a dozen bird houses, but later decided to build 36. He and Troop 281 held a bake sale at Wal-mart. They raised \$150, which Wal-mart matched. Kowalek made a poster listing the steps, and the troop built them all in one day. After consulting with camp naturalist Jamie Warner, the boys discovered the slits they'd made needed to be ovals. After another few hours fixing the houses, the boys nailed them directly to the trees. Kowalek made a map of the houses. "I made a map so the kids can clean them out. Bluebirds won't nest if another nest is there."

All of the students have part time jobs.

"It's rare to have so many Eagle Scouts graduating," says Honeywell. "Normally, you'd be lucky to have one per class."

Although fellow students don't pay much attention, people in the community are much more responsive. "They'll read about it in the paper, walk right up to you and congratulate you," says McMahon.

Scouting runs in two of the boys' families. McMahon and Kowalek both have younger brothers who are working on their Eagle Scout projects.

# Project was personal, for one Eagle

By BILL GOODMAN  
Post Staff

**LAKE TWP.** - All Eagle Scout projects include serving and improving the community, but Ray Honeywell's project was more personal. He decided to find and restore the bell of the Ruggles United Methodist Church on Route 29 near Harvey's Lake.

"My grandparents on my father's side were the last couple to get married before they rebuilt the church. My grandparents on my mother's side were the first to get married after the new church was completed," says Honeywell. "We had a picture on an old calendar. I took it upon myself to find out where the bell was located."

"I conducted several personal interviews with older church members, and contacted the lady about

*"We had a picture on an old calendar. I took it upon myself to find out where the bell was located."*

Ray Honeywell  
Eagle Scout

looking in her barn," Honeywell said. He and the troop retrieved the 125-year-old bell, which had been missing for almost 50 years.

The project required signatures from both the troop and church councils. After getting the necessary signatures, Honeywell and his father developed plans for the restoration. Honeywell and the rest of Troop 693, started by digging a hole big enough to hold the foundation, which needed to be

three feet into the ground. They built the foundation, and a time capsule was placed inside. The capsule contained a 100th anniversary bulletin from the church, a Boy Scout 85th anniversary patch and a picture of the troop. Finally, the boys capped the foundation. The boys then sandblasted the bell. "We had to be careful because it was already pitting," says Honeywell. They painted the bell black. After adding the roof and placing the bell, the restoration was complete.

In May of 1997 the bishop dedicated the bell to the church. The project took a total of 160 hours over four months to complete. "My grandparents on my mother's side were excited. Everyone was excited to have the bell back." The restored bell stands close to the entrance to the church.



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Since Dr. Goodwin's listing was inadvertently omitted from the 2000 Yellow Book, we are including this coupon to clip and file in your phone book as a handy reference.

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