



PHOTO COURTESY OF BOY SCOUT TROOP 50

Pictured is Eagle Scout Nicholas Emil "Nick" van Zuk.

Zuk honored as Troop 50 Eagle Scout

Special to the O-A News

On Sunday, Aug. 12, Troop 50 bestowed the Boy Scouts of America's highest rank during a ceremony honoring new Eagle Scout Nicholas Emil "Nick" van Zuk. He is the son of Rose-Marie Zuk and the late Dr. Gary Zuk of Auburn. Zuk is the troop's youngest Eagle Scout.

After earning Cub Scouting's Arrow of Light, Zuk joined Troop 11 before later transferring to Troop 50 in 2015. Since then, he has served as patrol leader, assistant senior patrol

leader, senior patrol leader, lead instructor and currently junior assistant scoutmaster.

Through his Scouting participation, he has earned 39 merit badges to date, qualifying him for a bronze, gold and silver Eagle Palm at the time of his ceremony. He also has accrued more than 75 nights of camping, 100 hours of community service, 100 hiking and backpacking miles and 20 paddling miles.

Zuk received the troop's 2017 James J. Baird, Jr. Honor Scout Award; was inducted into the Order of the Arrow, Scouting's

national honor society; served as a youth counselor at Camp Half Moon at Camp Frank G. Lumpkin; and earned the BSA Mile Swim Award. He completed National Youth Leadership Training, an intensive, six-day leadership development program, which provides Scouts with leadership skills and experience applicable to both Scouting and other situations demanding leadership.

In addition to various troop-related outings and campouts,

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in June 2017, Zuk participated in a 12-day backpacking expedition at Philmont Scout Ranch, the Boy Scouts' largest national high-adventure base located in Cimarron, New Mexico. He also has participated in a seven-day sailing expedition at the Boy Scouts' Florida National High Adventure Sea Base in the Florida Keys.

For his Eagle Scout leadership service project, Zuk designed and raised funds

for a Veterans Memorial Garden at Monarch Estate retirement community in Auburn. Family, friends and fellow Scouts and leaders logged more than 520 service hours planning and constructing the project.

The garden provides residents with an accessible concrete pathway; four benches that convert to tables, which allow residents and visitors more places to socialize; two self-watering raised planters; a butterfly garden; and a fountain.

After completing the Eagle Scout rank requirements, which included planning and executing

his service project, Zuk appeared before the Sau-gahatchee District's Eagle Scout Board on Sept. 19, 2017. He is among the four Troop 50 Scouts to earn the Eagle Scout rank during 2017.

Zuk is a ninth grader at Auburn Junior High School and is a member of the Auburn High School swim team. He and his family attend St. Michael the Archangel Catholic Church in Auburn, where he is an altar server.

Since the first Eagle Scout was awarded in 1912, nearly 2.5 million Boy Scouts have completed the Eagle Scout's

performance-based rank requirements, which currently include serving in progressive leadership positions, demonstrating outdoor and Scouting skill competencies, earning at least 21 merit badges and planning and executing a seminal Eagle Scout leadership service project. During 2017 alone, 55,494 Boy Scouts earned Scouting's highest rank.

Troop 50 is chartered by the Auburn Rotary Club and meets Monday evenings at First Presbyterian Church in Auburn. For more information about the troop, visit boyscout50.org.

Courtesy of the Opelika-Auburn News (November 18, 2018)