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Ryan Arrazcaeta of Basking Ridge, third from left, holds a Bernards Township Committee resolution he received at town hall on Tuesday night, Feb. 25, for completing the requirements of all 137 merit badges within the Boy Scouts of America organization. With him, from left, are sisters Celia and Catherine, friends Alessio Pasini and Diego Pasini of Warren Township, and Meina Franvius, an exchange student from Germany who is staying with the Arrazcaetas.

# Teen achieves rare Boy Scout distinction

**BERNARDS TWP.** – A local youth with the rare achievement of having completed all 137 Boy Scouts of America (BSA) merit badges was honored with a resolution of commendation at the Township Committee meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 25.

The Scout, Ryan Arrazcaeta, 16, of Deer Ridge Road, drew applause as he accepted the resolution from Mayor James Baldasare Jr.

Arrazcaeta achieved the distinction as a member of Boy Scout Troop 65 in Cedar Grove. He chose to remain with the troop after moving from Cedar Grove to the township in 2015 because of ongoing friendships.

According to the township resolution, only a few hundred Scouts have managed to achieve all 137 merit badges since the Boy Scouts of America was founded in 1910.

The committee offered its congratulations “for a personal achievement that will serve as a reminder of the importance of the pur-

suit of excellence throughout his life.”

The accomplishment led Arrazcaeta to accumulate more than 210 camping nights, 325 hiking and backpacking miles, 140 conservation service hours, 300 hours on the water, and 100 miles of riding, the resolution notes.

He has demonstrated “outstanding leadership within the Troop and has contributed many service hours to his community during his years in Scouting,” it adds.

Currently a Life Scout, he is now pursuing the Eagle rank, the highest in Scouting. For his Eagle project he is conducting a conservation project in the Great Swamp in the Harding Township area, and expects to conclude the work by the end of the summer.

Arrazcaeta is a member of the Lenapehoking IX Lodge of the Order of the Arrow, Scouting’s National Honor Society. He is also a Leave No Trace trainer and currently serves as his troop’s Outdoor Ethics Guide. He previously

served as Troop 65’s senior patrol leader.

In addition, he is certified in Arrowmen Conservation Level I; National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) Wilderness First Aid and scuba Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI) Advanced Open Water Diving; and completed National Youth Leadership Training (NYLT), National Advanced Youth Leadership Experience and NYLT Leadership Academy.

He also earned the National Medal for Outdoor Achievement, which has requirements including camping activities as well as training and merit badges.

“It was a lot of work” but “it was plenty of fun to do,” Arrazcaeta said after the meeting. “I enjoyed every minute of it. It’s fulfilling to work toward a goal like that.”

Arrazcaeta, the son of Raul and Lauren Arrazcaeta, is a sophomore at The Pingry School on Martinsville Road in the Liberty Corner section of Bernards Township.