

Earning them all: Few Scouts honored for unusual feat



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Former Provo resident Troy Pugh launched meritbadgeknot.com in 2008 to recognize Scouts who earned all merit badges offered by the Boy Scouts of America when they were Scouts.

"At the end of the day, there are very few Scouts that do this. They have to do it under their own motivation," Pugh said. "Usually it's from the Scout who wants to do something amazing."

He should know. He and his brothers reached for and achieved that very goal. Included with the 209 listed are the names Troy Pugh, Ryan Pugh and Roger Pugh.

He also would like to see a badge available recognizing the accomplishment, but so far that proposal has been overlooked by the Boy Scouts of America.

"I still have hopes because they are always changing things," Pugh said of the initial

BSA rejection.

Called the Merit Badge Knot, it would recognize all those who complete and earn all merit badges whether that was 80 in 1929 or 137 in 2013. According to his BSA research, Pugh said the recognition of such a badge would have an impact on a large number of people.

There are currently more than 1 million Scouts in the various programs in BSA that are eligible to earn the rank of Eagle Scout and earn merit badges. As recently as 2011, slightly more than 50,000 Scouts -- or 5 percent of the total Scouts -- were awarded the rank of Eagle Scout.

Those who earn 21 merit badges for the Eagle rank rarely go on and earn all badges available -- on average less than 18 Scouts per year.

"All of it boils down to the boys wanting to learn more and achieve more," Pugh said posing the question, "How many kids in high school are experienced scuba divers?"

His site celebrates Boy Scouts who would have earned the Merit Badge Knot should there have been one. The site also lists Scouts and their stories in an Achievers Registry. Passionate about the BSA program, Pugh is currently a Venturing Crew advisor in Washington State and still very actively involved in Scouting.

"Hopefully, they will see the breadth of the experience that the kids can have in the program. Hopefully, they will say there is so much more we can do with the program, let's do it let's get involved. It's great experience, let's do it," Pugh said.

Dallin Bunnell of Lindon is just one of many who will have earned the right to be listed on the meritbadgeknot.com website. The 15-year-old created his all-merit badge goal when he read in the Daily Herald about two scouts in Spanish Fork who had just earned all their merit badges.

He began when he was 10 years old, compiling his work and records for each of the more than the 120 that he wanted to earn, and reached his goal five years later.

The paperwork has been sent in but since names are posted between Pugh's entrepreneurial work, scouting and family, a month may pass before he is able to sit down and enter a new batch of names onto the archive list.

"He is one that I have in my pending list. I'm looking at his scout records right now and it looks like they are all here," Pugh said.

He knows there are many more than 209 who could be listed, that should be listed for their accomplishment.

"There are certainly more than that," he said. "I scoured what I could scour but I couldn't find everything." Sometimes by chance he finds one more, or there are people across the country who contact him.

In fact, not one for the limelight, Pugh said he would rather defer to those who accomplishing the feat recently such as Bunnell.

"Focus on Bunnell, he has 130 some stories to tell," he said. And he does.

One was when he told his dad that he wanted to earn them all.

"I said, 'well, you can't' because he was allergic to dogs, we thought he was anyway," Brent Bunnell said. "You know that is a great goal but how are you going to do dog care when you are allergic to dogs?"

His son got done with the majority of the merit badges and it came time to work out a solution for the Dog Care merit badge. Dallin Bunnell tried caring for a relative's small dog when they went on vacation.

"In about an hour I had a reaction, my eyes watered up," he said.

His family tried brainstorming and eventually adopted Carver, a Jack Russell terrier and chihuahua mix. Dallin Bunnell was successful in caring for Carver for the required three months and Carver, who sits, high fives, rolls over on command, is part of the family now.

The most difficult merit badge to earn wasn't the Dog Care badge however. It was the Bugle badge.

Dallin Bunnell had to get a bugle -- eBay purchased -- learn to read music, and perform numerous songs on a horn he had never played before. His reward for this feat that took four months to accomplish was waking up hundreds at Jamboree with Revilee and lights out with Taps.

"The drafting and architecture, the game design -- that was fun -- and the engineering," Dallin Bunnell said were the most fun merit badges to earn.