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Local scout earns all merit badges

Eagle Scout Charles Acker has all 142 badges as member of Troop 34

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Eagle Scout Charles Acker



Edyta Blaszczyk|Odessa American

Eagle Scout Charles Acker poses for a portrait Wednesday outside of the Boy Scouts of America Buffalo Trail Council building. The Permian student has accumulated 142 merit badges and did a fire safety project at the City of Odessa Fire Station 6.

Posted: Monday, June 20, 2016 5:45 am

By Ruth Campbell rcampbell@oaoa.com



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by [Ruth Campbell](#)

During his career in Boy Scouts, Charles Acker had two goals — to become an Eagle Scout and earn all 142 merit badges available.

Having obtained Eagle Scout status at age 14, Acker reached his merit badge objective in May.

Acker has been a member of Troop 34 of Odessa, which was sponsored by St. Luke's Methodist Church and is now sponsored by the First Christian Church, since age 11.

The last merit badge Acker got was for scuba diving and he said it proved one of his favorites. He trained with PADI (Professional Association of Diving Instructors) instructor Darrell Rhyne, whose dive shop is across the street from the Balmorhea State Park.

As a youngster, Acker said the badges he enjoyed most were wilderness survival, metalwork and welding. For the welding, he said he got to use an 1880s forge.

When scouts earn the ultimate number of merit badges, Acker said their name is placed on a website and the scout is sent a knot patch for their uniform.

"I was a bit shocked. When I was 11, it just seemed so far away and actually getting to that goal. ...," said Acker, who is now 18. "It took about three days until I finally got it and everybody repeating it. ...Finally, I just smiled and started crying because I was so happy from it."

Just before he netted Eagle Scout, Acker said his great uncle, Roy Charles Johnston, whom Acker was very close to, was diagnosed with cancer and died.

"He passed and he didn't get to see me achieve Eagle and get all the merit badges, so getting eagle and getting all the merit badges I wish he was there to see it, but I know he was looking down on me seeing all these great things that I've accomplished. It meant a great deal to me," Acker said.

Acker's Eagle Scout project was at St. Luke's United Methodist Church on 42nd Street.

"My original plan was to put in automatic door openers for the church, because they had a lot of older people who went to that church. So I installed that. While I was at it, they said, 'Can you repaint our parking lot and move some of the handicapped poles?' So I did that," Acker recalled.

Then the church asked if he could install benches. The whole venture took more than a year, but Charles' father, Kevin, said by the time the projects were complete there were probably 30 people involved.

"Don't ever sell yourself short with just one thing. Ask if there's anything else for you to do. Not only does it benefit you and benefit them, but it also looks really good on your resume," Charles said.

Kevin Acker and his wife, Beth, have five other children who are all girls. Charles is the baby and the only boy.

"They really cheered him on too, all the girls," Kevin said. "To me they've encouraged it along the way, too. I think they've been a big help."

More Information

- St. Luke's Odessa.
- Boy Scouts Merit badges.

“The other thing about scouting for me (is that) it was a way to get out of the house full of girls. There’s also a father son bonding. It gave us a lot of bonding time to get close,” Charles said.

Kevin said he also literally watched his son grow.

“It was like watching a sapling go to a big tree because that’s exactly what happened. We have a picture of him at the scout ranch standing next to the pond. Now he’s a much bigger kid,” Kevin said.

He noted that Charles learned how to shoot guns, ride horseback and learned a lot of useful survival information.

“Earning all the merit badges has been a really good thing,” Kevin said. He added that a lot of people have stepped up to help him earn the merit badges.

Since he turned 18, Charles has been serving as an adult leader in scouts.

Barney Barnes, a former adult leader and now an assistant scout master for Troop 34, was Charles’ scoutmaster. Barnes has known Charles since he was 11.

“I knew him while he was super active in the troop,” Barnes said. “When he took a leadership position, he took it very seriously. I watched him work with the younger boys. He encourages them to set their goals high.”

Charles will be a senior at Permian High School in the fall. He is in Kantorei, the school’s varsity choir, and serves as an officer at-large. He also is involved in theater and serves as an officer and plays lacrosse with the high school’s club team.

Charles, who lives in Monahans, takes voice and piano lessons. He plays guitar, the bugle sometimes, and when he’s bored, the violin.

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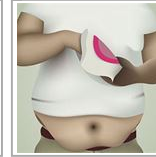
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