



BADGES

Francis Howell Scout
earns every Boy Scout
merit badge



JANUARY 16, 2013 12:15 AM • SARAH BARABA
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Though he has not yet earned his high school diploma, Michael Carter has flown a plane, backpacked through the Rocky Mountains and gone scuba diving.

He accomplished those feats not as a Jacques Costeau in the making but rather as an Eagle Scout attempting to achieve every merit badge offered by the Boy Scouts of America.

The Francis Howell High School senior recently achieved that goal, earning all 134 merit badges, one of only six Scouts in the country to do so, according to the website Merit Badge Knot, a registry independent of the BSA that keeps track of Scouts who have earned all available merit badges throughout the organization's history.

"I don't think he realized what a monumental task it was going to be, but I'm not surprised that he accomplished it," said Michael's dad, Patrick Carter.

A member of Boone Trails Troop 533, Michael began his badge quest about six years ago when his older brother was working toward the Eagle rank, which requires 21 merit badges. The brothers earned badges together, setting Michael on an accelerated pace.

"I was 13 or 14 and was almost an Eagle Scout," Michael, now 17, said. "When a kid gets Eagle Scout they usually stop participating in Scouts and I didn't want to do that."

So he set out to earn all the Boy Scouts' badges. He achieved Eagle rank, the highest scouting level, in 2010 when he built a reflection garden at Sts. Joachim and Ann Care Service in St. Peters for his service project. Making Eagle rank, much less earning all of the Boy Scout merit badges, is no easy task, said Rodger Brisso, committee chairman of Troop 533. Only 2 percent of Boy Scouts ever reach Eagle, he said.

"Somewhere around 15 or 16 there's usually girlfriends and jobs and cars pulling at you and it's not always the coolest thing to be a Boy Scout. There's a lot of pressure that hits young adults," Brisso said.

Michael managed to stick with it, taking six years to achieve all 134 badges. The badge-earning process is intensive, requiring paperwork, documentation and a counselor for each badge attempt.

"I like to think of it as I had 134 different mentors to get me through," Michael said.

The number and types of merit badges available have evolved significantly since the BSA began in 1912. Badges in wilderness survival, wood carving and camping have been joined by welding, cinematography and nuclear science. Michael rounded out his collection by earning the entrepreneurship badge, which required him to start his own business.

"It exposes you to a ton of different types of information that allows you to be more open to new ideas," Brisso said of what earning merit badges offers a Scout.

Though he completed a 50-mile bike ride, canoed and learned to make paper from scratch for badges, Michael said the most challenging task to master was basketry.

"I broke and had to go out and remake baskets about eight times," he said.

In addition to earning all available badges, Michael also earned four commemorative badges in carpentry, path finding, signaling and tacking that were part of the BSA's 100th anniversary celebration. Though earning all merit badges requires a tremendous time commitment, it also requires a large financial one, Michael said.

"I'm very fortunate that my parents helped me out and paid and whatnot.

If not for my dad, I'm not sure I would have made it. He pushed me along," Michael said.

Michael plans to attend Missouri University of Science and Technology in Rolla next fall to study nuclear engineering. Though he will age out of Boy Scouts at 19, he plans to stay connected to the organization and mentor younger members.

"I wouldn't be the person I am today if not for Scouts," he said.

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ST. CHARLES (MO.) EAGLE SCOUT EARNS 134 MERIT BADGES

12/21/2012

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ST. CHARLES, Mo.--As Michael Carter watched his brother set and achieve a goal of becoming an Eagle Scout, he set a goal that few Boy Scouts accomplish—earn every available merit badge.

However, Michael went beyond every currently available merit badge and earned four additional badges—Carpentry, Pathfinding, Signaling and Tracking—that could be earned only during 2010 as part of the Boy Scouts of America’s 100th anniversary celebration.

When Michael earned  **Entrepreneurship Merit Badge** last month, he completed his six-year goal and became only the fourth Boy Scout to earn 134 merit badges, according to the website, meritbadgeknot.com. He becomes the eighth Scout from Missouri and the first in the Greater St. Louis Area Council since 1994 to earn all merit badges, according to the website.

“The hardest merit badge for me to earn was  **Basketry**,” said Carter, who became an  **Eagle Scout** in 2010. “I learned so much from so many counselors throughout this experience.”

One of Carter’s greatest challenges was to find counselors for some of the more obscure merit badges, as well as new merit badges. The BSA added  **Search and Rescue**,  **Kayaking** and  **Welding** this year. He often

traveled throughout Missouri and Illinois to attend special merit badge classes held outside the Greater St. Louis Area Council.

Carter is a member of Boy Scout Troop 533, chartered to the Harvester Lion's Club in St. Charles, Mo. In addition to earning merit badges, he served in eight leadership positions in his troop, including Senior Patrol Leader. He attended the BSA's three high adventure bases. He backpacked at the Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico, canoed through the Boundary Waters in Minnesota, and went SCUBA diving at the Florida Sea Base.

He is a senior at Francis Howell High School and is planning to major in nuclear science in college. He is a member of [Saints Joachim and Ann Roman Catholic Church](#) and earned the [Ad Altare Dei](#) award, the religious emblem of the faith.

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10:20 AM, Jan 2, 2013

ST. CHARLES, Mo. (KSDK) - A local Eagle Scout has accomplished something not seen in the St. Louis area in nearly 20 years.

Michael Carter of St. Charles earned all 134 merit badges from the Boy Scouts of America.

It was a six year goal that he had and he recently completed it with the Entrepreneurship Merit Badge.

"For each badge, you have to call a counselor and go meet with them and go over the requirements after you've worked on it for a while. It took a lot of learning how to talk on the phone to complete strangers," he said. "And I'm really glad that there's 134 people out there that were willing to help me along the way."

Michael Carter said his brother inspired him to chase after the merit badge feat.

Carter, 17, is a senior at Francis Howell High School. When he gets to college next fall, he plans to major in nuclear engineering.