



Frederick earns all 132 Boy Scout badges

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By Laurie Bailey /

Cole Frederick hiked 37.9 miles in five days last week to earn his Boy Scout backpacking merit badge. It was the last badge he'll earn as a Boy Scout, but only because, at age 13, he already has earned the other 131 merit badges.

"Very few boys have done that in the history of scouting," Bill Kemerer, one of his scoutmasters, said. In fact, although there are no official records, it's estimated that only 165 ambitious youngsters have achieved this feat in scouting's nearly 100-year history.

Cole of Latrobe also has completed the requirements to earn the rank of Eagle Scout and has just earned the Boy Scouts of America's prestigious William T. Hornaday Award, recognizing those who have completed exceptional conservation projects. Only an average of 15 Scouts each year complete the rigorous requirements, according to the Boy Scout magazine, Boys' Life.

Cole will be honored for his accomplishments tonight at the Friends of Scouting dinner at the Greensburg Country Club. He will be recognized by incoming chief scout executive Wayne Brock, keynote speaker and Boy Scouts of America national leader.

"He's a very outgoing child, not afraid to speak in public," said Cole's father, Joseph Frederick. "[Scouting] has given him great leadership skills."

For his Eagle Scout project, Cole rallied 49 volunteers to plant 800 saplings and 200 chestnut seeds in Forbes State Forest near Laughlintown in one day.

To earn the Hornaday award, Cole spearheaded seven required projects. For one, he collected 1,174 cans of paint at the Unity Township Municipal building and recycled them.

This spring, he also recruited his family and friends for the tedious task of raking algae from the pond at the Winnie Palmer Nature Reserve in Latrobe and placing a barley mat on the bottom of the pond to prevent future algae growth.

"We had to be careful because we didn't want it to touch the liner of the pond or disturb the wildlife," Joseph Frederick said.

Last year, when he heard about the ceiling collapse at the United Methodist church, Cole replaced and cleaned the lighting fixtures and fans.

"I like to go hunting and fishing, but I also like to give back to the community and to plant trees," he said.

Mr. Kemerer was his adviser for the Hornaday award project. "He has just done a phenomenal job with that. He's probably one of the most ambitious young men I've ever seen," he said.

While Cole is an avid outdoorsman, he said the merit badges most closely related to his future plans are the American business badge -- "that's managing money and stocks" -- and the theater badge.

"I also want to be an actor," he said.

But last week's backpacking badge, he said, may have been the most challenging.

"We had to move our tent, clothes, water and food needs on our backs. It was pretty heavy," he said. Cole hiked the trails in Cook Forest with his dad and other members of his troop.

Consistently a leader among his peers, Cole is also thoughtful and well-mannered, sending handwritten notes to friends in the hospital, Mr. Kemerer said.

"He's a dynamic kid."

While working on a hospital badge, he persuaded his 17-year-old sister, Ashley, to take him to Latrobe Hospital to hear a radiologist speak. Her goal now is to attend medical school and enter that field, Mr. Frederick said.

"Scouting has actually made our family closer to one another because we've done a lot we wouldn't normally do," his dad said.

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