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Scout may be youngest to net all 120 badges

Rodger L. Hardy Deseret Morning News

ELK RIDGE -- When Christopher Haskell receives his small boat sailing merit badge on Wednesday, he will have earned all 120 badges offered by the Boy Scouts of America.

A national spokeswoman says that at the tender age of 13, Haskell may be the youngest Scout ever to achieve that goal.

Renee Fairrer, associate director of marketing and communications for the Boy Scouts of America, said she's interviewed hundreds of Boy Scouts for news stories and granted hundreds of interviews on Scouting over the years.

"I've been doing this for five years, and this is only the second time I've run across a young man who's earned all 120 merit badges," she said. "The other young man was older."

Fairrer recalls meeting Haskell and his father last year at a Scout convention. He was still a dozen or so merit badges away from meeting his goal at that time, she said.

But because national headquarters does not track age information, it is impossible to say for sure that Haskell is the youngest, Fairrer said.

Haskell's mother, Julie Haskell, said Tracy Grover, his den mother in Cub Scouts, was responsible for helping her son's desire for Scouting to catch fire five years ago.

Grover says she doesn't have any special formula for encouraging boys to be good Scouts.

"You have to love the kids for who they are," she said. "He was always interested and wanted to be there."

Christopher Haskell said his favorite was the science merit badge, his least favorite the auto mechanics badge. Julie Haskell said the Payson Middle School student called the auto mechanics badge "boring." Christopher Haskell said the most difficult was the communication badge because it required public speaking.

"I gained leadership skills," Christopher Haskell said of the entire experience.

It helped pull him out of his shyness, said Julie Haskell, who described her role as "the ride and supply lady."

"When he got his Eagle -- that was the best experience in his whole life," she added.

For his Eagle project, Christopher Haskell and nine fellow Scouts from Troop 918 spruced up a city park by building a retaining wall around the tennis courts and adding steps. They also built bench-high block walls around play equipment so parents could sit and watch their youngsters.

In addition to the gamut of merit badges, Christopher Haskell has received all but three of Scouting's special recognition awards.

But Scouting isn't his only love, Christopher Haskell said. At 6 feet and growing, he has developed a keen interest in basketball and hopes to someday play professionally.

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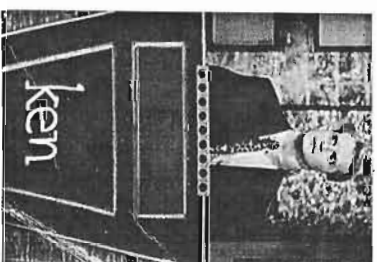
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lion people at the time. Pakistan's Rover Scouting program is part of the Boy Scout program for young men over age 18. (CN 8/17/91)

Youngest to Earn All Merit Badges. The Boy Scouts of America doesn't track ages for earning merit badges, but it appears that Christopher Haskell, Elk Ridge, Utah, First Ward, is the youngest to earn all 120 offered badges by age 13. (DN 7/29/03)

Hollywood Honors Scouting. In Disney's feature-length movie about the Boy Scouts, "Follow Me, Boys," co-star Vera Miles, Hollywood, California, Stake, played not only the wife of the Scoutmaster (played by Fred McMurray), but as "mother" to dozens and dozens of Boy Scouts. The Boy Scouts of America honored the film production company and actors for depicting in a realistic manner the positive influence Scouting can have on a community and a boy's life. (CN 4/8/87)

Most Merit Badges. Who earned the maximum number of merit badges first? Since the number of available merit badges has changed, the records have been difficult to nail down. Here are those we know of:

1958: Byron G. Mills, 22nd Ward, Salt Lake, Utah, Stake, is believed to be the first LDS Scout to earn all 101 Boy Scout merit badges. He completed his last merit badge, Agriculture, in December 1958 after a seven-month effort to grow two varieties of cotton. (CN 2/14/59)

1974: Craig Carson, 16, and his brother Chad Carson 15, Ogden 55th Ward Ogden, Utah, Weber Heights Stake, each earned all 127 merit badges. (CN 9/14/74)

1981: Kent Bates, 15, Heber City 5th Ward, earned all 119 offered merit badges. (CN 1981)

1984: John T. Alquist, 15, and his nephew, Joshua J. Peterson, 14, both of the Hunter 6th Ward, each earned all 119 offered merit badges, plus two no longer available, for a total of 121 by 1984. (CN 2/12/84)

1988: Steve Sweat of the Iona, Idaho, 1st Ward, earned all 119 offered merit badges. (CN 2/28/88)

1988: Art Finch of the Idaho Falls, Idaho, 25th Ward earned all 121 offered merit badges. (CN 12/17/88)



Howard C. Moore, Deseret Morning News

Vera Miles, star of Disney's "Follow Me, Boys," was a frequent visitor to Salt Lake City.

1990: Troy Jens Pugh, Ferndale 2nd Ward, Bellingham, Washington, Stake, earned all 126 offered merit badges. (CN 7/14/90)

1993: Michael Arsenault, 17, of Oakridge 1st Ward, Farmington, Utah, Oakridge Stake, earned all 131 offered merit badges. (CN 5/29/93)

1993: Jared Toone, Crystal 1st Ward, Minneapolis, Minnesota, Stake, earned all 127 offered merit badges. (CN 7/19/93)

1996: David Wilson, 15, South Hill 3rd Ward, Puyallup, Washington, South Stake, earned all 124 offered merit badges. (CN 9/21/96)

1996: Jacob Walters, of the Hyrum 3rd Ward, Hyrum, Utah, North Stake, earned all 124 offered merit badges. (CN 9/21/96)

Youngest Eagle Scout? Who is the youngest to receive the Eagle Scout award? In 1985, the youngest was David Heidenreich who, at age 12, had completed all the requirements for his Eagle. He was presented his Eagle by his father, Richard Heidenreich, who was the Scoutmaster. They were members of the Freeport Ward, Rockford, Illinois, Stake. (CN 2/24/85)

Highest-altitude Boy Scout Camp (1930 World Record). As of 1930, the highest official Boy Scouts of America Scout camp continues to be Camp Steiner at 10,400 feet above sea level in the Uinta Mountains of Northern Utah. The camp was acquired for the Boy Scouts in 1930. Today, more than 55,000 Scouts use the facility each summer. (DN 2/6/02)

Largest Encampment. More than 9,000 LDS Boy Scouts and leaders, the largest such gathering ever, came together at Camp Pendleton, California, for the Sept. 3-6, 1982 "Mormon Trails Encampment." Sunday sacrament service required 100 priests, 100 teachers and 300 deacons to bless and pass the sacrament. Opening day was 100 degrees in the shade, prompting the sale of 120,000 soft drinks, 80,000 chocolate malts, 50,000 chocolate milks, 81,000 big stick Popsicles, 75,000 cartons of milk, 15,000 cartons of orange juice, 30,000 bags of chips and 25 tons of ice. (CN 9/11/82)

Cub Scout Officer. The highest position held by a Mormon in the Cub Scout program was chief executive over the entire program. Rodney H. Brady, at the time the Los Angeles, California, Stake president, was appointed "Top Cub" in July 1977. His task was to oversee the 1.9 million Cubs in the United States and their 625,000 leaders, plus prepare for the 50th anniversary celebration of Cub Scouting in 1980. (CN 8/6/77)

First Cub Scout Three-Time "World Athletic Champs."

Gregory Weichers, Derek Schiffman, and Kevin Armstrong of Pack 353, Union 5th Ward, Sandy, Utah, Willow Creek Stake, won the 1978 National