

FULLERTON'S ONLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER – EST. 1978 – YEAR 45



LOCAL NEWS

Jackson Newell becomes the 2nd Fullerton resident to earn every Scout BSA merit badge

BY JOEL BEERS ON MARCH 21, 2023

Jackson Newell stepped out of a pool and earned his first merit badge as a member of the Boy Scouts on March 26, 2016. Little did he know that was the start of a 138-step journey that seven years later would end with the Fullerton high school senior, and member of the Newport Beach-based OC Troop 90, joining a most exclusive club: He is one of the approximately 550 people who have been confirmed as recipients of every merit badge that can be earned through Scouts BSA, formerly known as Boy Scouts of America.

There is no official number of scouts who have completed every merit badge. Until recently, no one was keeping official track. In 2018, the website <http://www.meritbadgeknot.com> (<http://www.meritbadgeknot.com>) launched a registry allowing all those who earned every merit badge and had the documents to confirm to sign up. There are currently 542 names on the registry. Once Newell's paperwork is submitted to the site, he will become the second confirmed Fullerton and 15th Orange County resident to have accomplished the feat.

“It just speaks to his perseverance and an incredible ability to manage your time to be able to put together the time to learn about each of these subjects,” said Don Webb, a former Newport Beach councilmember and mayor who since 1992 has been Eagle Scout coordinator for the Newport Beach-Costa Mesa district where Newell's troop 90 is located, “It's very rewarding to see somebody accomplish something so rare and worthwhile.”

Merit badges are achievement awards awarded to scouts who demonstrate proficiency in, or knowledge about, one of 138 skills, activities, or subjects. The range of merit badges is vast, including those core skills that have long been

synonymous with scouting, such as camping, first aid, hiking, and wilderness survival; to the more scientific: astronomy, chemistry; vocational: home repair, plumbing; artistic: theater, sculpture; and nature-based: birdwatching, forestry.

Scouts can begin working toward earning merit badges at age 11, when they are eligible to join Scouts BSA, but must complete

them by the time they are 18. There is no limit to how many they can obtain, but they're also not mandatory unless a scout wants to advance in rank. For instance, to become an Eagle Scout, one must have 21 merit badges by age 18. Newell had 50 by the time he was 13. "He is just one of those kids willing to do just about anything once," said Jackson's mother, Heidi. Newell graduates from Troy High School in June and plans on attending Fullerton College and taking various classes to prepare for his chosen National Park ranger career. Through his quest to earn every merit badge, he learned that to discover what you value; you have to be open to learning and doing new things.



Privacy Policy (<https://fullertonobserver.com/wpautoterms/privacy-policy/>) | Terms and Conditions

(<https://fullertonobserver.com/wpautoterms/terms-and-conditions/>)