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Dedicated local Eagle Scout earns every available merit badge

Provided by **Joe Shotwell**
 Posted: January 16, 2009

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Shawn Alan Olsavsky didn't initially set out to become a Boy Scout merit badge superstar. But when 17-year-old Shawn Olsavsky sets his mind to achieve a goal, he does. He earned Eagle Scout status at age 13. (The average age for earning Eagle Scout is 17.) This December, he received an early Christmas present; he finished his goal of earning all 121 merit badges on December 8th. The final badge was presented at the Boy Scout Court of Honor, Dec. 15 at 6:30 p.m. at Cicero United Methodist Church.

About two years ago, the then 15-year-old Olsavsky realized he had 73 badges and was within striking distance of earning all 121 merit badges, a feat few have ever achieved.

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Before a Scout can receive a badge, he is interviewed by a merit badge counselor who has knowledge in the subject area. The Scout must prove that he is able to demonstrate the skills learned for the badge, comfortably converse and answer questions about the topic. With Shawn completing a Badge almost weekly, the counselors got used to expecting him to tap them on the shoulder.

Shawn's father, Alan Olsavsky, a Lean Manufacturing Consultant, has been active as a Boy Scout leader for a number of years.

Shawn is a senior in high school at Hamilton Heights. He is a member of Boy Scout Troop 103 that meets at Cicero United Methodist Church. The troop is part of the Del-Mi District.

To reach the 121-badge summit, Olsavsky took a trip to West Virginia Rafting (for the Whitewater Badge), bicycled more than 150 miles around Monon Trail (for the Cycling Badge), and had to learn to survey property (for the Surveyors Badge).

Olsavsky, a dedicated high school swimmer & captain, student Government officer, NHS member, and Wendy High school Heisman State Finalist, journey began in June 2002 when he earned his Swimming Merit Badge. He worked this summer to earn his Fly Fishing Badge, swamped a sail boat and finally wrapped up Bugling December of this year. To earn this final badge it took him about 6 months and a lot of hard work

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since he had never played an instrument. As a result, Olsavsky is now in rarified air among Scouts.

About 900,000 boys are active in scouting nationally, according to the Boy Scouts of America. More than 110 million boys have been affiliated with the organization since it was incorporated in 1910. But fewer than 100 Scouts have ever earned the maximum number of badges in the organization's 100-year history of existence, according to Scout experts.

Joe Shotwell is with Boy Scouts of America, Cicero Troop 103. Contact Shotwell at (317) 984-6000.

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