

Deseret News

Murray Scout earns every merit badge

By **Joseph M. Dougherty**
Deseret Morning News

Published: November 6, 2007

Alex Recksiek probably should have made the news a year ago.

Just before his 17th birthday, he managed to complete the requirements for his 122nd merit badge — bugling — which put him in a class with few peers, those Boy Scouts who manage to earn every merit badge possible.

Two other Utah Scouts, Dallin Manning, Draper, and Parker Duncan, Bountiful — each managed the feat in 2006 and 2007 respectively.

The Boy Scouts of America doesn't keep track of how many Scouts earn all of its badges, which are designed to create well-rounded, savvy Scouts.

To earn the rank of Eagle, Scouts must earn 21 merit badges, 12 of which are required and include what most people think of as core Scouting principles: Camping, First Aid, Communications, Personal Fitness, Environmental Science and three Citizenship merit badges: Citizenship in the Community, Citizenship in the Nation and Citizenship in the World.

Currently, the organization offers 121 merit badges, but when the organization revamped Atomic Energy and renamed it Nuclear Science in 2005, Recksiek made sure to earn that one, too.

Thus, Recksiek, a member of Troop 6065, Murray, is one of the few Scouts who has earned more merit badges than are currently available.

Now an 18-year-old senior at Murray High School, Recksiek was recognized last week for his accomplishment during a dinner held in his honor.

"It's nice to be recognized," Recksiek said.

It has been a lot of work for him between his 11th and 17th birthdays.

Recksiek's first merit badge, which he earned Feb. 6, 2001, was Fire Safety. It was his first time going to Scouts and his troop passed the badge requirements.

It didn't take long for him to get fired up about earning everything he could that has to do with Scouting.

By the time he reached the rank of Eagle — a day before his 14th birthday — he had already garnered 90 merit badges.

That left 32 to go over the next two years to reach a goal he had set for himself when he was 13.

But it wasn't all smooth sailing.

Recksiek wasn't looking forward to bugling, though he's an accomplished piano accompanist. He arranged his bugle practice times around times his family members wouldn't be home so they wouldn't have to hear him practice and make "ugly sounds."

Genealogy didn't sound interesting and water skiing proved to be difficult, he said.

"I saved the most difficult and ones I just didn't want to do for the end," he said.

But the difficult and uninteresting badges still had to be earned.

"I realized that if you like it or you don't, it's going to be beneficial to you," Recksiek said. "I wasn't going to get that close and not finish two of them."

Fortunately, there were more merit badges to like than ones to dislike.

Among Recksiek's favorites were Horsemanship, Aviation, Oceanography, Model Building and Entrepreneurship.

It was a little tough for Recksiek to turn 18 last month. That's the age that disqualifies a Scout from progressing in Scouting.

"Suddenly, it ends and there's nothing else you can do," he said.

But that leaves some more time for school, though one could argue that Recksiek, with a 3.99 GPA, likely spends enough time on homework already.

After graduation in the spring, Recksiek plans on serving a mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and then enrolling in college.

E-mail: jdougherty@desnews.com

© 2007 Deseret News Publishing Company | All rights reserved