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## JC Boy Scout achieves rare 138th merit badge

Michael J. Sellman Mar 13, 2018



Boy Scout, Braydon Schmidt, of Troop 64 in Junction City, holds his 138th merit badge which was presented to him for sculpture.

Michael J. Sellman

After receiving 137 merit badges, Braydon Schmidt of Boy Scout Troop 64 in Junction City, received his 138th — a rarity for many boy scouts.

With a variety of skills learned from earning all those badges, this badge was for sculpting.

Schmidt, a junior at Chapman High School, has been part of his troop since 2012. Before that, he was a member of the Cub Scouts since he was in first grade.



"I've been slowly working my way up," he said.

There have been 137 badges available. During Schmidt's time with the Boy Scouts, some merit badges had been discontinued such as the computer badge, which Schmidt had previously obtained.

"That's how I have 138, even though there's 137 available," he said.

It took him approximately five months to obtain his recent badge. The difficulty was finding a merit badge counselor - someone who is experienced in the subject matter.

"Because it's not one that's commonly found around here," he said.

He was able to convince his high school art teacher to be his merit badge counselor.

She looked over all his projects until he obtained his badge.

Schmidt ended up placing a pear in casting gel, until the gel hardened. After, he used composite clay to take the shape of the pear left in the gel.

He also visited Prairie Horizons Studio for Creative Arts in Chapman to observe how the studio was set up, what their art-making processes were, and find out their thoughts on how sculpting affects society.

"I can't really draw but thankfully I'm pretty decent at sculpting with clay," he said.

If he had more free time, Schmidt said he'd pursue sculpting much more.

Merit badge counselors often teach the same merit badges. There's a limited number in Chapman and Junction City.

To obtain some of his badges, he had to look outside the area, and at times outside the state.

"For some, I had to go all the way to Oklahoma," he said.

For others, Schmidt knew people who taught the respective field and had useful information.

He convinced some of those people to sign up to be merit badge counselors so he could obtain his badges.

Schmidt has learned other fields such as veterinary medicine, and public safety — his "absolute favorite one."

He worked on a public safety project in which during a two day period, he sat in his car for an hour at a stop light, and tallied how many drivers were wearing seat belts or not.

Schmidt's goal is to enter nursing school. He's even begun his goal-career while in high school as he's currently a CNA at Memorial Hospital in Abilene on Saturdays and Sundays.

Even after his 138th badge, the pursuit hasn't ended yet.

The Boy Scouts of America have a program called Eagle Palms in which young men who earn five, 10, 15, or more merit badges beyond the required 21 necessary to become an Eagle Scout, can obtain a bronze, silver or gold palm branch.

Those candidates have to participate in a Scout Master conference every three months during which they have to discuss what they've done in the last three months — how they've helped other troops, themselves, and others.

"Then you go over five merit badges that you did after you became an eagle scout," Schmidt said.

If the candidates pass the board, they obtain the palm leaf.

Right now, Schmidt has 13 palms.

In his first six months of scouts, he obtained at least 10 of his badges.

"I thought I can do 10 now. Why not go for more," he said.

He's also been ask to give local talks such as to the Manhattan Rotary Club, and will be giving a talk soon to Troop 41 in Junction City, encouraging them to stay in scouting.

To Schmidt's knowledge, there may have been two other scouts in Troop 64's Council (Coronado Council) who obtained as many badges as he has obtained.

But he's the only one in his troop with a merit badge for sculpting.