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North Central

Boy Scout attains top rank and more

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SHAVANO PARK — Over the past several years, Clark High School senior Lance Schulze has backpacked across "rugged mountain wilderness" in New Mexico and spent days aboard a yacht in the Bahamas.

He's dug for artifacts in an archeological pit at the University of Texas at San Antonio, visited NASA and been to too many Scout campouts to count. And recently, Schulze joined the ranks of Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, former President Gerald Ford, astronaut James Lovell Jr. and businessman H. Ross Perot: He became an Eagle Scout.

But Schulze arguably became an Eagle Scout more than five times over — he surpassed earning the 21 badges required to reach the Boy Scouts of America's highest rank, successfully completing all 121 merit badges offered by the scouting group. What's more, he has followed in the footsteps of his older brother, who also earned all of the Scouts' merit badges. But David Schulze earned 120 badges — all that were offered at the time. After the older Schulze earned the 120 badges, the Scouts added one more.

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Lance said seeing his brother pursuing the goal inspired him.

"We always were together so much — just as brothers," Lance said. "He went off and he started getting them all and getting them all, and I said, 'Hey, why not?'"

Lance doesn't give his older brother much grief, but he also doesn't let him forget who has more merit badges.

"I don't (rub it in) too much because I'm a nice guy," he said.

Earning all offered merit badges is a feat not often accomplished by Eagle Scout candidates. Officials with the Alamo Area Council of Boy Scouts of America said that Lance and David were the most recent Scouts to earn all possible merit badges. Across the nation, about 25,000 boys earn the Eagle Scout rank each year. Roughly five complete all merit badges, said Ed Rogers, the Alamo Area Council's finance director.

"It's just a very unusual accomplishment to have two Scouts in one family achieve that," he said. "It is just an exceptional achievement."

One of the best-known merit badges is for the required community service project, and Lance didn't skimp on his. He volunteered to improve the rectory at St. Francis of Assisi Church, including installing two garage doors, landscaping the yard, laying and staining a concrete slab under a portico and painting the rectory. Despite the many hours Lance dedicated to the project, he says the hardest merit badge to earn was for Personal Management, which required him to track his finances for months.

"One of the most difficult ones to get is personal management," he said. "It takes several months. You have to keep a log on everything, like all the expenditures you see — it's the financing part of it. You have to show how you could have saved money and how you could have deferred that cost somehow."

Lance says the Scout program has taught him to handle adversity.

"I think it has overall made me a more adaptable person — a person that can deal with almost anything," he said. "Nothing in life will ever be easy."

Lance's mother, Barbara Schulze, said she's proud of her three sons. Aaron, 14, is a Boy Scout working toward the rank his two older brothers already have earned. Barbara said she has been involved with her sons' Scout activities for 16 years and says the program has helped them learn strong principles by which to live.

"They have the principles of being trustworthy, honest, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean and reverent," she said. "When they advance through their different ranks, they learn different aspects of all of these things."

Beyond the principles, Scouts learn practical skills such as first aid, she said. And that came in handy when a girl at Clark High School was found on the ground, seemingly in shock. But at first sight, Lance knew that wasn't the case.

He took his coat off and covered her, telling his father, who was also on the scene, that she wasn't exhibiting the symptoms of shock. When EMS arrived, Barbara Schulze said, the technicians said the girl wasn't in shock — she'd broken her collarbone.

"He listed off the five symptoms of shock," she said. "That's one of the things he had to learn in his advancements. There's little things like that, that you don't know they're learning, and then they know it."

Beyond his achievements as a Scout, Lance also is an accomplished vocalist, singing with the Children's Chorus of San Antonio and the Clark High School choral group. He's Student Council treasurer and in the National Honor Society, the Spanish Honor Society, the History Honor Society and academic decathlon. Lance says his life fits neatly into three groups — academics, Scouts and singing.

He says they don't overlap much, so many of his friends were surprised to hear he even was involved in the Boy Scouts, much less that he'd earned all 121 merit badges.

For his accomplishments, the Shavano Park City Council honored Lance at a recent meeting. The council unanimously approved naming Jan. 13, 2007, Lance Anthony Schulze Day.

"I'm real proud of him," his mother said. "In the whole nation, probably four people get all the badges each year. It's rare. It's very rare."

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