

South Ogden brothers join elite scouting group

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SOUTH OGDEN — Freezing ice, a concussion and a physical disability didn't deter two brothers from earning every merit badge available in the Boy Scout program.

Addison Weeks is one of the youngest in America to earn all 135 merit badges. The 14-year-old also earned four historical badges offered to scouts in 2010. His brother, Landon, 16, is the only physically disabled special needs scout to earn all of the merit badges. Their older brother, Garrett, now serving a mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, earned all the badges at a young age as well.

Few youngsters have earned all of the merit badges offered in the scouting program. According to meritbadgeknot.com, 179 boys have achieved that goal. In August, Isaac Loveland of Kaysville earned them all the day before he turned 15. In June, 13-year-old Cole Frederick of Pennsylvania earned them all.

Addison, a ninth grader at South Ogden Junior High School, and the youngest of four brothers born to Dr. Matt and Lanette Weeks of South Ogden. He said he was just 10 years old when his brother Garrett earned all of the merit badges, which inspired him to do the same. It took him three years and four months to earn them all, but first, he wanted to earn his Eagle.

"My first goal when I started in the Boy Scouts was to get my Eagle rank and I set a goal to get this done at a younger age than my three older brothers," he said. "I was able to benefit from my brothers' experience and earned the rank of Eagle Scout when I was 12 years old."

Earning all of the badges wasn't easy. In order to earn his backpacking badge, Addison had to travel to Las Vegas over Thanksgiving to find a camp that was warm enough to hike more than 30 miles. To earn his wilderness survival badge, he built a shelter for the night under some logs. The scout helping him pulled on a big chunk of wood which came loose, flew more than 15 feet and smacked Addison right in the head.

"I got a minor concussion," he said. "I was glad my dad who is a doctor, was my scoutmaster and was there to give me medical attention."

Another experience happened three years ago while making igloos at North Fork Park. Addison ended up being soaked to the bone and was so cold he didn't sleep all night.

"The next morning I heard the other (scouts) saying how toasty they were," he said. "This experience taught me to man up when things get hard."

For the most part, it was a great experience, he said. Being in the right place at the right time allowed him to save a fellow scout member from being crushed by a 400-pound boulder. He enjoyed earning his coin collecting badge because he got to spend that time with his mother.

The most challenging badges to earn were the water sports and the welding badges. Well, he said it was a simply amazing experience.

Landon, a student at Bonneville High School, was born with three fingers on each hand on no elbows that bend. He said scouting has taught him that although he has limits, he can pretty much do anything he sets his mind to.

“I have had amazing leaders and people in my life who have helped me achieve my goals in scouting despite my physical disabilities,” he said. “Being the only physically disabled special needs scout ever to have earned all of the merit badges is a big accomplishment and it makes me feel good.”

Landon said with help from the Weber School District Foundation, who gave him a recumbent bicycle, he was able to earn his cycling merit badge. It took him months to earn his fly fishing badge. Earning his scuba merit badge was challenging as well as it was difficult to find an instructor willing to accommodate his physical disabilities.

“I was thrilled when Adventure West Scuba took me on as a student and adapted the equipment for my special needs,” he said.

Landon said he hopes his accomplishments will help others achieve their goals as well.

“The more I talk to people and share my experience, the more I realize that everyone faces some type of challenge. Some of us have obvious challenges and others are not so noticeable,” he said. “I think sometimes people look at me and think I can’t do something because I have short arms and three fingers on each hand. A tough obstacle is getting people to see past the physical appearance. I hope I can set an example for those who are physically disabled that they can progress in the scouting program.”

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