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Mayor pins badges of honor on two boy scouts

By Kevin Tustin ktustin@21st-centurymedia.com Jul 19, 2019

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UPPER DARBY — Two local Boy Scouts were honored Wednesday by Upper Darby Mayor Tom Micozzie for accomplishing a very rare feat: Earning every Scouts BSA merit badge the Boy Scouts of America offers.

John Newsham, 14, of Norwood, and Stone Hassinger, 14 of Drexel Hill, both of Troop #112 in Swarthmore, were presented with the Mayor's Service Award after they worked to earn all 137 merit badges. The two scouts earned all of their badges in just about three years for establishing their skills in areas like camping, public speaking, railroading and even bugling.

"This is a huge accomplishment and there were some very fun moments," said Hassinger, an incoming freshman at Monsignor Bonner and Archbishop Prendergast Catholic High School. He said there were some hard parts, like learning 15 different calls to earn his bugling badge.

Newsham, too, said bugling was very hard, but his favorite badge, and also his first badge earned, is for physical fitness. He started his Scouts career in the township before moving to Norwood where he will begin his high school career at Interboro this fall. He has spent the last month as a counselor-in-training at Resica Falls Scout Reservation in East Stroudsburg.

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Troop 512 (Springfield) leader and Cradle of Liberty Council Board Member Stephen Perrone has helped Newsham and Hassinger on their journey to their badges.

"It's unheard of in our Cradle of Liberty council. I'm not aware of any other scouts accomplishing this," he said. "What they have done is so exceedingly rare that we're very pleased for Upper Darby Township to recognize them."

The Boy Scouts of America Thursday could not verify how many scouts have previously met this earned every merit badge in the program's history, but called it an incredible achievement.

"Earning every merit badge takes dedication and perseverance, which are important values taught in Scouting programs. We congratulate both young men for this incredible accomplishment, and for the knowledge and skills they have gained through their adventures in the Boy Scouts of America," read a statement from BSA.

Micozzie was proud to give one of the township's highest civilian honors to Hassinger and Newsham.

"This is a rare and monumental achievement that speaks volumes of their dedication," said Micozzie. "This milestone in their lives is a direct result of their passion, commitment and perseverance in accepting this challenge. The training skills they have experienced have prepared these young men for the many future endeavors and aspects of like they encounter.

"Stone and John are exceptional role models for their peers and community, and we are fortunate to have them represent Upper Darby Township."

The next achievement for Newsham and Hassinger is to earn the rank of Eagle Scout, which requires the completion of a community service project. Hassinger plans to plant about a dozen trees in Mount Moriah Cemetery and hopes to complete this project in the fall. Newsham said he has many ideas for his service project, but has not yet settled on one just yet.

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